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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO LATE-MEDIEVAL EPISTEMOLOGY WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO JOHN MAIR (ca., 1467-1550) AND
MEMBERS OF HIS CIRCLE**

BY

ROBERT NEIL WOOD

SUPERVISED BY

PROFESSOR ALEXANDER BROADIE

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ABSTRACT

The central theme of my thesis is the nature of assent as expounded in late-medieval epistemology and the way demonstrative assent relates to assents of probable reason, in particular, assents of faith and opinion. The historical context for my discussion is the sixteenth century and I make extensive use of the writings of John Mair (ca., 1467—1550), Principal of the University of Glasgow from 1518 to 1523 and members of his circle.

I begin by exploring what it means to be a human being. The human being, as understood by Mair and his colleagues, is “mind informing body”. There is only one specific form of human beings, the “mind” (*anima intellectiva*). The mind is primarily the powers of intellect and of will. It is in virtue of these powers that a human being is able to acquire knowledge. The remaining chapters are dedicated to an examination of the late-medieval use of “notion” (*notitia*) which is a technical term used to refer to a variety of cognitive acts. It is one of the building blocks of late-medieval epistemology; it was universally accepted that a notion is a quality which vitally changes the cognitive power. The term “notion” did not originate in late-medieval philosophy although it is clear from the attention it received in the opening years of the sixteenth century that the “notion” was a central feature of late-medieval epistemology. John Mair and the members of his circle distinguished in the first instance between sensory and intellectual notions, intuitive and abstractive notions, and, apprehensive and judicative notions. These divisions of notions were explored in order to reveal the structure of human cognition and to distinguish scientific or demonstrative knowledge from belief and opinion, and to distinguish between theoretical and practical knowledge. In the thesis close attention will be paid to these divisions.

To my wife Sue and to my daughter Lauren—

May all your ramblings bring you Joy

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction..... | 7 |
| Philosophical objectives | 7 |
| Historical context | 13 |
| The Human Composite | 20 |
| Introduction | 20 |
| The state of grace and the logic of inception type propositions | 21 |
| The pilgrim defined as matter and form | 27 |
| Pluralism refuted | 29 |
| Mair's argument for the unitary nature of composite beings | 33 |
| The Nature of Mind | 44 |
| <i>Anima intellectiva</i> —The specific form of human beings | 44 |
| Some relevant meanings of the term “power” | 45 |
| Realism eschewed—the mind is simple and indivisible | 46 |
| The Scotist challenge—the formal distinction rejected | 49 |
| The logic of terms— “intellect” and “will” are convertible but not synonymous terms. | 52 |
| Naturally and conventionally significant terms | 55 |
| Material and personal supposition— distinguishing ultimate and non-ultimate terms | 57 |
| The logic of terms applied to the terms “mind”, “intellect”, “will” | 60 |
| The nominalist solution | 61 |
| “Intellect” and “will”—absolute and connotative terms | 62 |
| The mind has parts by extrinsic denomination | 71 |
| Sensitive and appetitive powers are really distinct | 73 |
| Notions..... | 79 |
| Introduction | 79 |
| Notions <i>simpliciter</i> | 80 |
| The assimilation of knowledge—species in the medium | 83 |
| Sensory and intellectual notions | 99 |
| Intuitive and abstractive Notions | 106 |
| Introduction | 106 |
| Intuitive and abstractive notions distinguished | 107 |
| Intuitive and abstractive notions terminate at the same object | 114 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Abstractive notions as the basis for demonstrative knowledge..... | 124 |
| Apprehensive and judicative Notions | 139 |
| Introduction | 139 |
| Apprehensive and judicative notions defined..... | 139 |
| Whether the proposition is said to be the judgment? — | |
| The concept of extrinsic denomination | 147 |
| Conclusion | 149 |
| Evident Notions and Scientific Knowledge..... | 150 |
| Introduction— Evident and inevident notions distinguished | 150 |
| The nature of scientific knowledge | 156 |
| Demonstration and the generation of knowledge | 160 |
| Actual and dispositional knowledge..... | 163 |
| Theological truth | 167 |
| The Virtue of Faith | 171 |
| Some basic concepts | 171 |
| The Phenomenon of faith | 179 |
| Is faith an intellectual or moral virtue?..... | 190 |
| Concerning the Relations Between Knowledge, Faith, Opinion..... | 193 |
| Introduction | 193 |
| Actual knowledge and faith are not compatible | 193 |
| Authority and demonstrative knowledge | 195 |
| Infused faith and actual and dispositional knowledge..... | 196 |
| Acquired faith and dispositional knowledge | 198 |
| Opinion, faith and knowledge | 201 |
| Opinion generated, Knowledge Corrupted | 202 |
| Faith and error | 205 |
| Conclusion | 208 |
| Is Theology Theoretical or Practical Knowledge? | 209 |
| Introduction | 209 |
| Some Definitions..... | 209 |
| The theoretical and practical intellect..... | 213 |
| Practical Notions | 215 |
| How to distinguish theoretical and practical dispositions | 219 |
| Theoretical Premises and Practical conclusions..... | 222 |
| The relationship of theoretical and practical knowledge to | |
| Theology | 223 |
| Practical and Prudential Knowledge | 226 |
| Is faith theoretical or practical knowledge? | 229 |
| Conclusion | 231 |
| Bibliography | 236 |

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation, as its title reveals, is virtuously limited in ambition. It is an investigation into late-medieval epistemology with particular reference to John Mair and members of his circle. The central theme of my thesis is the nature of assent. I am especially interested in the variety of human abilities by means of which the pilgrim is able to acquire knowledge.

PHILOSOPHICAL OBJECTIVES

The first chapter is dedicated to introducing and developing a coherent picture of the human being. It begins with the pilgrim as the ordinary Christian on the way toward the end. The pilgrim's journey starts either from the first instant the pilgrim employs reason or from the last instant in which the pilgrim does not use reason and the journey continues until the time that the pilgrim reaches the end. This introduction to the concept of the pilgrim makes it clear that like many medieval philosophers Mair was not averse to introducing logic in order to clarify primarily theological statements. In the next section attention is given to how Mair and his colleagues understood the nature of the human composite. The pilgrim is "mind informing body". What is the relationship of the mind to the body? The answer is given in terms of the relation between form and matter but there was widespread controversy as to whether a human being was composed of many forms inhering in the same matter, or whether there was only one form inhering in matter which was specific to the human being.

In the second chapter my attention turns to the metaphysical nature of the mind. Briefly stated, the mind is understood to be capable both of acts of intellect and acts of will. Medieval philosophers were at odds over whether or not the diversity of mental acts was evidence of a real diversity in the mind's constituent powers, that is, the powers in virtue of which the mind is able to perform acts of intellect and acts of will. Some philosophers, amongst whom Aquinas may be numbered, maintained that the diversity of mental acts is sufficient evidence that the distinction between the intellect and the will is a real one. Others, including Ockham and Mair, thought that the distinction between the intellect and will as powers of the mind was a construction of reason. Mair thought that the mind was a metaphysically simple substance. He maintained that while the terms "intellect" and "will" are imposed in order to represent properly and to help clarify the dynamic nature of mind, they do not reveal anything of the true metaphysical nature of the mind.

The remaining chapters introduce and explore various kinds of notions, or cognitive acts. I begin with a discussion of notions in general and indicate that the central feature of a notion is that it is a likeness of the object it represents. The notion vitally changes the cognitive power, and in the strict sense, the notion is itself the vital change. One of the most important controversies in medieval philosophy concerned the possibility of action at a distance. In epistemology this issue arose in the attempt to describe the nature of the contact that exists between the cognitive power and the object. Some thinkers, like Mair, thought that it was necessary to posit the existence of species which radiated from their objects to the cognitive power. However, those who postulated the existence of species in the medium were obliged to respond to William of Ockham whose lectures on the *Sentences of Peter Lombard* denied

the existence of species in the medium. This is an interesting debate which clearly reveals that the epistemology of John Mair cannot simply be interpreted as Ockhamist because, unlike Ockham, Mair accepted the existence of species in the medium and defended their necessity in the cognitive process. I conclude the chapter with a brief consideration of the division between sensory and intellectual notions.

Chapter 4 concerns the division between intuitive and abstractive notions which is crucial to developing the concept of scientific knowledge. Late-medieval philosophers, like their predecessors, adhered to the Aristotelian doctrine that there was nothing in the intellect that had not been first in the senses. Moreover, like many others, Mair thought that knowledge is ultimately acquired through intuitive notions. However, scientific knowledge concerns the universal and not the particular. I examine Mair's account of the relationship of universal knowledge to knowledge of the particular and explain how the former can be generated from the latter. There are two central themes in my discussion. First, intuitive and abstractive notions terminate with equal immediacy at the same external object. Thus, the distinction between intuitive and abstractive notion cannot be formulated in terms of their object. Mair, and the members of his circle, argued that they are to be distinguished in terms of the judgments to which they give rise. Intuitive notions are notions precisely representing their object. They cause evident judgments concerning the existence and the contingent properties of their object. In contrast, through an abstractive notion it is not possible to judge of the existence or non-existence of the object, nor is it possible to judge of the contingent properties of the object. There are at least two kinds of abstractive notions, memorative and universal. Though I discuss these two kinds of abstractive notion at length, it is with the abstractive notion *qua* universal that I am primarily concerned

since it serves as the basis for scientific knowledge. It is clear that since intuitive and abstractive notions terminate at the same object, it is possible to defend the claim that scientific knowledge which is of the universal begins with intuitive notions of the singular. The claim is defensible because if they did not terminate at the same object then it would not be possible to have direct knowledge of the external object. However, since both intuitive and abstractive notions terminate at the same object it follows that experience is ultimately the basis of scientific knowledge which is about what is universally and necessarily true. Second, I consider the ontological status of the universal and defend the doctrine which maintains that universals are made up (*ficta*) from particulars collected by the intellect, against the doctrine that universals truly exist and are discovered by the intellect. I conclude that the fact that universals are made up (*ficta*) and are imposed to signify at the pleasure (*ad placitum*) of the intellect does not imply that their signification can be changed at the pleasure of the intellect. Despite the fact that the signification of universal terms is by definition general, once imposed their reference is unique. It is beyond doubt that understanding the division between intuitive and abstractive notions is central to grasping the nature of scientific knowledge.

The mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive division between apprehensive and judicative notions is an important division since it is on this division that the distinction between understanding and knowledge rests. It is the division between apprehensive and judicative notions that is introduced and developed in Chapter 5. Simply stated it is possible to have an apprehensive notion both in relation to incomplex things, e.g., a notion of a person is simple, and also in relation to complex things such as propositions and syllogisms; e.g., “This person is white.” and “This mind is an intellect. This mind is a will. Therefore a

will is an intellect.” An apprehensive notion is one through which we understand something without judging that what has been apprehended is either true or false. Judicative notions are exclusively in relation to the complex, e.g., propositions and syllogisms. A judicative notion is a judgment that a proposition we are apprehending is true or false. Apprehensive notions are naturally prior to judicative notions. As a result, apprehensive notions are the foundations for judicative notions. Judicative notions are of two kinds, evident and inevident. I take this division to be the next stage in the acquisition of scientific knowledge. In chapter 6 the discussion is located in the context of Mair’s discussion of the nature of theological truth and whether it is possible for the pilgrim to give evident assent to such a truth. The basic issue concerns the acquisition of demonstrative assent which relates directly to the nature of the assents of probable reason, for example, assents of faith and opinion. I begin with a consideration of Mair’s definitions of evident assent, delaying a consideration of inevident assent to my discussion of the “Virtue of Faith” in the following chapter. An evident assent is an assent which is unhesitant, true, caused by principles necessitating the intellect, to which the intellect assents, and in so assenting it cannot be deceived. Scientific knowledge is about the knowable, which is nothing other than propositions fitted by nature to become evident by the application of discursive reason. I consider whether Mair thought it possible for the pilgrim to acquire scientific knowledge of theological truth and this leads to a discussion of the nature of theological truth. It is interesting, that as it was understood and developed by Mair, theology in the restricted sense constitutes faith rather than knowledge because theology is ultimately aimed at providing justification for faith.

In chapter 7, I address the question “How is the pilgrim to acquire faith?”. A discussion of the nature of inevident assent is undertaken here. I limit my attention to the nature of two kinds of inevident assent: opinion and faith. An assent of faith was thought to be produced by means of an assent to the conclusion of a topical argument and an act of will. I explore the relationship between the conclusion of the topical argument and the act of will in order to determine precisely what is understood by the term “faith”. In this chapter I bring to bear many of the concepts developed in earlier chapters, especially, what is meant by an act of intellect and an act of will, and the nature of scientific knowledge. Having established the nature of faith and its epistemological status I consider in Chapter 8 the relationship of faith to scientific knowledge and opinion. Is it possible to give both a scientific and a faithful assent in relation to the same proposition? Is faith compatible with knowledge? If so, under what conditions?

In the final chapter I return to the nature of theological inquiry and address the question: “Whether theology is theoretical or practical knowledge?”. I take this opportunity to consider the nature of theoretical and practical notions. I develop the contrast that whereas theoretical knowledge aims at understanding, practical knowledge aims at activity. Thus one of the concerns which is taken up is whether theology is aimed at understanding or whether theology is about guiding human action. This prompts a consideration of whether some theological syllogisms are constructed exclusively of theoretical premises. If there are theological syllogisms which are constructed exclusively of theoretical premises, can they be formally directive of human activity? Or, are theological arguments which are formally directive of activity constructed out of a combination of both theoretical and practical premises? I then consider the nature of prudential

knowledge and link this with the question: Is faith related to human activity in the same way that prudential knowledge is? In other words: Is faith a virtue which guides all other virtues regulating human conduct in the same way that prudential knowledge is the guide of all moral virtue?

In order to elucidate these matters I have studied a wide range of late-medieval logical, philosophical, and theological works. However, as this dissertation is a discussion of late-medieval epistemology with particular reference to John Mair, I have dedicated the large part of my efforts to a detailed examination of his writings. Central to my investigation is the *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*. It is a theological work rich in philosophical insight whose influence on the philosophers and theologians of the early sixteenth century was enormous. Except for the writings of Professor Alexander Broadie, there is not a substantial amount of scholarship in my immediate area of research. Therefore, through my thesis, I am endeavouring not only to clarify the relevant philosophical concepts but I am also striving to make available source material that has not been published since the reformation. And in so doing I hope that my research will shed much light on the intellectual and cultural scene of pre-reformation Scotland.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In recent years, research has shown that the early sixteenth century was a period of tremendous intellectual activity in Scotland and Paris. The period prior to the Reformation saw no fewer than twelve Scots hold the Rectorship of the University of Paris. The attraction to the University was great and though Scotland had its own Universities it was uncommon for a promising Scot to pursue his entire academic career at home. The enticement to Paris was the presence of renowned scholars such as Jan Standonck and Erasmus the distinguished spiritual

leaders from the Low Countries. The presence of such great thinkers contributed to the reputation of the University of Paris as the most influential and prestigious learning centre in all of Europe. As such, it attracted many of the most brilliant intellectuals of the time. One of the most extraordinary figures of this period was John Mair of Gleghornie whose intellectual influence can be detected in the works of his students and colleagues David Cranston, Gilbert Crab, George Lokert, William Manderston, Hector Boece of Aberdeen, Robert Ceneau, Gervaise Waim, Antonio and Luis Coronel, and Robert Caubraith. These thinkers form what has been labelled the “circle of John Mair”. John Mair and the members of his circle are sometimes referred to as the “spirit of Parisian Nominalism”. This is largely the result of the emphasis of current scholarship which has directed its attention to a consideration of the importance of the early sixteenth century as the last great period of scholastic logic. This characterization of early sixteenth century is unfortunate since it does not fully represent the scope of the independent and interesting philosophical and theological achievements of Mair and his colleagues during this period.

Mair was born in ca., 1467 in the village of Gleghornie near Haddington in East Lothian. It was there that Mair received his early education. His first known movement, an unusual one for a Scot, was to God’s House College, Cambridge which was renamed Christ’s College in 1505. Shortly afterwards he proceeded to the College de Sainte Barbe in Paris and received his final arts degree in 1494. The following year he took up his duties as Regent of Arts, that is, became a full-time lecturer. At this time Mair began the study of theology under Jan Standonck of the College de Montaigu. This relationship was to be short-lived as Standonck was banished in 1499 by Louis XII for having

protested and campaigned against the divorce and remarriage of the monarch.

In the absence of Standonck it was Mair and his friend Noel Beda who took charge of Montaigu. During this period Mair's logical talents were manifest and his lectures on logic began appearing in 1499 before printing had been introduced to Scotland. In 1505 a collection of these logical writings was published as a *Commentary on the Logic of Peter of Spain*.¹ It was as a fellow of Navarre in 1506 that he received his Doctorate of Theology. In the same year, 1506, Mair began lecturing on the *Sentences of Peter Lombard* the recognized medieval textbook of theology. At that time the Sorbonne was the headquarters of the faculty of theology which was the hub of theological disputations. A theological disputation was the public defense of one's thesis and formed part of the examination system; Mair from 1506 to 1517 presided over at least one major academic disputation a year.² Mair's first theological works began appearing as *Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* and by 1509 he was considered to be a formidable authority in matters of logic, philosophy and theology. Antonio Coronel offers confirmation of our Master's talents when he writes that Mair was known as the outstanding prince of princes among theologians and not only of theologians but also of philosophers.³

Despite efforts to bring Mair back to Scotland it was not until 1518 that he relented to take up the Principalship at the University of Glasgow. Mair returned to Scotland at the apex of his popularity in

¹ John Mair. *Acutissimi artium interpretis Magistri Ioannis maioris in Petri Hyspani summulas Commentaria*, (Lyons, 1505). Hereafter referred to as *In Petri Hyspani summulas*.

² James Farge. *Bibliographical Register of Paris Doctors of Theology*, (Toronto, 1979); [p. 305].

³ Hubert Élie. "Quelques maîtres de l'université de Paris vers l'an 1500" *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 25-26 (1950-1951): 193-243, [p. 209]. Élie is quoting from A. Coronel. *Posteriora Aristotelis*, (Paris, 1510).

Paris. This was no doubt owing to both his ability as an educator and his skillful and prolific writing. It is not only Mair's personal contribution to the intellectual scene which should be noted. The success of his circle of students and colleagues was also great. Of these David Cranston, from the Diocese of Glasgow, bears a special mention. His career, though brief, was certainly admirable. His logical writings, like Mair's, display a marvelously clear and probing intellect. His reputation is apparent in the 1509 edition of Mair's *Commentary on the Fourth Book of the Sentences*.⁴ It was not only edited by Cranston but is also prefaced by a dialogue between the Scots poet Gavin Douglas and Cranston himself. It is a dialogue constructed by Mair in order to elucidate the relationship between philosophical and theological questions. Always keen on appealing to his audience Mair constructed this dialogue at a time when the relationship between philosophy and theology was under intense scrutiny and criticism from both the Humanists and religious reformers. This fruitful friendship between Mair and Cranston was to be brief because Cranston's career came to an early end with his death in 1512.

The works of Mair reveal the close relationship that he maintained with both colleagues and students. Noel Beda, George Lokert, Antonio Coronel and Robert Ceneau are among those who have directly edited works of Mair. Thus, Mair's departure from Paris by no means implied the end of his influence. During these years Mair continued with pace unabated teaching in both the faculty of arts and theology while fulfilling his official duties and publishing extensively.

During his period at Glasgow, 1518-1523, his workload was surely enormous. Nevertheless, it was during these years that Mair published

⁴ John Mair. *Quartus Sententiarum*, (Paris, 1509).

his *History of Greater Britain*⁵ which placed the search of truth as the end of all historical inquiry. The ardent desire to shed light on the truth is evidenced in all of Mair's writings. In a more practical light the *History* was a sustained argument for the alliance of Scotland and England. This work was so voluminous that no Scottish press could undertake the task of its publication and Mair, in 1521, returned to Paris in order to see his work through the presses. His time in Glasgow, though productive in respect of publications, was significantly less so than in earlier years. He published only four more works. His final work, which was to appear in 1530, was a Commentary on Aristotle's *Ethics* which was begun while Mair was still at Glasgow.⁶ In 1523 Mair was incorporated into the University of St. Andrews one year after Archbishop James Beaton's transfer from Glasgow to that same university town. It is thought that Mair may have proceeded to St. Andrews in order to maintain his friendship and professional relationship with Beaton. During the years 1523-1525 Mair again joined with Lokert and together they served as assessors to the dean of the faculty of arts suggesting and implementing academic reforms on the model of the University of Paris.

In matters pertaining to faith Mair's position was nothing less than orthodox. This is nowhere more evident than when on 29 February 1529 Patrick Hamilton was burned at the stake for preaching the heretical, Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone. Mair, though regretful at the loss of such a fine theologian, extended his congratulations to Archbishop James Beaton for "removing, not without the ill-will of

⁵ John Mair. *Historia Maioris Britanniae tam Angliæ quam Scotiæ per Ioannem Maiorem, nomine quidem Scotum, professione autem Theologum, e veterum monumentis concinnata*, (Paris, 1521).

⁶ John Mair. *Ethica Aristotelis Peripateticorum principis. Cum Ioannis Maioris Theologi Parisiensis commentariis*, (Paris, 1530).

many a noble but unhappy follower of the Lutheran heresy.”⁷ It must not be forgotten that Mair was first and foremost a scholastic theologian whose writings and life were dedicated to preserving it. His scholastic attitude is captured in his Dedication to Cardinal Wolsey in the *Commentary on Aristotle’s Ethics*.

In almost all [Aristotle’s] opinions he agrees with the Catholic and truest Christian faith in all its integrity... in so great and manifold a work, if it be read as we explain it, you meet scarcely a single opinion unworthy of a Christian gentleman.⁸

Though Mair may have at one time intended to remain in Paris the political and cultural climate was highly charged and Noel Beda was “enthusiastically” engaged in the pursuit of heretics. A pursuit of which Mair does not appear to have been too keen himself. And in 1531, the aging Mair returned to St. Andrews⁹ perhaps seeking, what he thought would be, the tranquil surroundings of his home country. Two years later, in 1533, Mair became Provost of St. Salvator’s College and the Dean of the Faculty of Theology.

One relationship about which there has been much speculation is that of Mair to the reformation. Particularly there is interest in exploring the impact that Mair may have had on John Knox who in 1531 began studying theology under Mair’s tutelage. Knox’s much cited testimonial to Mair in *The History of the Scottish Reformation* leaves little doubt that Mair was influential in Knox’s intellectual formation. Knox writes that Mair in 1528 was a man “whose word then was held as an oracle in

⁷ Alexander Broadie. *Lokert. Late-Scholastic Logician*, (Edinburgh, 1983); [p. 14].

⁸ Broadie. *Lokert. Late-Scholastic Logician*, [p. 16]. Broadie is quoting from the Dedicatory epistle of Mair’s *Introductorium in Aristotelis dialecticen*, (Paris, 1508).

⁹ Farge. *A Bibliographical Dictionnaire of Paris Doctors of Theology*, [p. 307].

matters of religion”.¹⁰ It is unfortunate in the absence of publications by Mair from 1530 onwards that this also means the loss of autobiographical material which was always rich in the opening pages of Mair’s works. The last twenty years of his life saw no new publications. The final period immediately preceding Mair’s death in May 1550 was one of radical change, the reformers were unstoppable. Until recently Mair’s philosophical and theological achievements have been neglected. His writings were eclipsed in part by the rise of humanism, but more importantly his achievements fell victim to the upheavals of religious reform. In this thesis I hope to foster a greater appreciation of the writings of John Mair and the members of his circle.

¹⁰ John Knox. *John Knox’s History of the Reformation in Scotland* (2 Volumes), ed. William Croft Dickinson, (London, 1949); [Volume 1, p. 15].

CHAPTER 1

THE HUMAN COMPOSITE

INTRODUCTION

John Mair's *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* might seem an odd text for an investigation into late-medieval epistemology and the distinction between knowledge and belief. But for reasons which will quickly emerge that will be the main text. I shall begin my consideration with a distinctly theological question—"How is the pilgrim able to acquire faith?"¹¹. The justification for this starting point is suggested by the text itself, a systematic elucidation of the concept of acquired religious faith, it is an exploration of the metaphysical and epistemological framework of the pilgrim. "The pilgrim," the ordinary Christian in his journey through life, Mair writes, "is one who exists in the state of demeriting and meriting blessedness. Or to put it this way, the pilgrim is someone who is on his way and making for the end."¹²

The question of the pilgrim meriting and demeriting the grace of God is clearly a theological concern. Though it is important not to blur the distinction between philosophical and theological inquiry we must not lose sight of the fact that our master was both an outstanding theologian and a philosopher. As a result, Mair often employs theological principles to accomplish what would not be possible simply

¹¹ John Mair. *In primum Sententiarum*, prol., q. 1; (Paris 1519); [fol. 1^{ra}]. Quomodo possit viator acquirere fidem?

¹² Mair. *In primum*, prol., q. 1; [fol. 1^{rb}]. Viator est ille qui existit in statu demerendi et merendi sibi beatitudinem. Vel sic. Viator est qui tendit de via ad terminum.

by way of philosophical argument. Consequently, many philosophical statements and problems are explored within a theological framework and are relevant to both disciplines. There is no doubt that theology was the preeminent mode of discourse and a brief comment should be made on the precise nature of the relationship of theological to philosophical and scientific inquiry. In a defense of theological writing Mair writes: “it is not objectionable to introduce philosophy and other sciences without which theology cannot be understood thoroughly.”¹³ Of all the sciences, that which was most widely employed and to which the most attention was devoted, was logic.

THE STATE OF GRACE AND THE LOGIC OF INCEPTION TYPE PROPOSITIONS

The late-medieval concern with logic is obvious when Mair writes that the state of the pilgrim *qua homo* meriting blessedness begins (*incipit*), either from the first instant (*a primo instanti*) he employs reason, or from the last instant (*ab ultimo instanti*) in which he does not use reason until the time he is at the end.¹⁴ A proposition whose main verb is “to begin” (*incipit*) or “to cease” (*desinit*) is the paradigmatic case of a verb either indicating inception or cessation and was classed as

¹³ John Mair. *In quantum Sententiarum*, *prol.*, q. 1; (Paris 1519); [fol. 1^{ra}]. Non obscenum est introducere philosophiam et cæteras scientias sine quibus theologia non potest bene capi.

¹⁴ Mair. *In primum*, *prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{rb}]. Status enim merendi incipit a primo instanti in quo homo utitur ratione vel ab ultimo instanti in quo non utitur ratione quousque sit in termino. Terminus autem est quando est beatus vel primo non est sive sit in purgatorio sive inferno. Hoc namque sonat vis vocabuli viator secundum legem. Good historical accounts of the development of *incipit/desinit* propositions are by Norman Kretzmann. “Incipit/ Desinit” in *Motion and Time, Space and Matter*, eds. Peter K. Machamer and Robert G. Turnbull, (Ohio, 1976); [pp. 101-136] and John E. Murdoch. “Infinity and Continuity” in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, eds. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, Jan Pinborg, (Cambridge, 1982); [pp. 564-591; n.b. 585-587]. For a detailed analysis of this topic in late-medieval logic see Broadie. *George Lokert. Late-Scholastic Logician*, [pp. 108-119].

an exponible proposition.¹⁵ It was generally agreed that an exponible proposition is a proposition having an obscure sense by reason of a sign posited in it.¹⁶ The term *exponibile*, like much of scholastic vocabulary, is a technical term that conventionally is rendered simply as “exponible”; but it is more perspicuous when it is glossed as “that which is capable of exposition”; or even, “that which requires exposition”. While there was universal agreement as to the fact that an exponible proposition is obscure exactly what was meant by “having an obscure sense” was a much disputed question among logicians and there is no evidence that consensus was ever achieved. Mair was certainly hesitant to declare that his definition of exponible proposition was the right one. This is obvious when he writes that it is usage rather than art that

¹⁵ John Mair. *Exponibilia* in *In Petri Hispani summulas*, (Lyons, 1505); [sig. II 8^{ra}]. ...dictiones quæ important inceptionem vel decisionem cuiusmodi sunt istæ: incipit, producit, sit, generatur; desinit, destruitur, corrumpitur propositiones exponibiles reddunt. Et quia incipit et desinit inter cæteras sunt famosiores sunt de eis præ omnibus dicendum est.

¹⁶ Mair. *Exponibilia*, [sig. II 7^{ra}]. Propositio exponibilis est propositio obscurum sensum habens ratione signi in ea positi. Duæ differentiæ ponuntur in hac definitione. Primo dicitur “obscurum sensum habens” defectu cuius hæc non est exponibilis: Ignis est calidus. Dicitur “ratione signi in ea positi” defectu cuius hæc et similes: Hominis *a* asinus quodlibet rudibile est, non est exponibilis secundum eos qui dicunt universales non debere exponi in quantum huiusmodi; quia licet propositio habeat obscurum sensum veritatis quia dubium est ad condicendum propositioni datæ quin eadem condicat isti: *a* hominis *a* asinus quodlibet rudibile est. Hoc non obstante illa non est exponibilis quia ille obscurus sensus non provenit ratione signi sed ratione huius quando terminus distribuitur in ordine ad duos terminos quorum unus stat determinate et alter confuse tantum respectu termini distributi. Quæ sunt signa in hoc proposito? Arbitror magis ex usu dependere quam ex arte quia quid nominis debet suaderi ex communi modo loquendi. The sign *a* is a special quantifier that confers merely confused supposition onto the term which it immediately precedes regardless of the kind of supposition the term would have had in the absence of the sign *a*. Merely confused supposition is when it is possible to descend from a proposition such as “All dogs are black” to a disjunction of singulars; for example, “All dogs are this or this or this ...”. Conversely one can ascend from any disjunct back to the original proposition. See A. Broadie. *The Circle of John Mair: Logic and Logicians in Pre-Reformation Scotland*, (Oxford, 1985); [pp. 53-54] and George Lokert. *Late-Scholastic Logician*, [p. 46]. Exponible proposition is also defined in George Lokert. *Termini Magistri Georgii Lokert Scoti theologiæ professoris acutissimi*, (Paris, ca., 1523); [sig. 2^r]. For the Latin see fn. 18.

indicates those terms that render a proposition obscure. Hector Boece gives the following account of “having an obscure sense”:

an exponible proposition is a proposition having an obscure sense by reason of some syncategoremata or a term including a syncategoremata on account of which it is fitting to unfold its meaning (*explicare*) by means of a proposition more known that is convertible with it on which its truth or falsity depends.¹⁷

A syncategorematic term is a term that signifies not something but in some way. Lokert provides a list of the terms normally treated as requiring exposition, the list of terms thought to render a proposition obscure includes, exclusives, exceptives, collectives, reduplicatives, comparatives, superlatives, and *incipit* and *desinit*.¹⁸ Of these terms some are said to be purely syncategorematic terms and some are said to include syncategoremata. On the account given by Boece there are

¹⁷ Hector Boece. *Explicatio quorundam vocabulorum ad cognitionem dialectices conducentium opera Hectoris Boethii Philosophi insignis in lucem edita*, (Paris, 1519); [sig. m 5^{rb}]. *Propositio exponibilis est propositio obscurum sensum habens ratione alicuius syncategorematis vel terminum includentis syncategorema propter quod opus est eam explicare per propositionem notio-riorem secum convertibilem a qua eius veritas vel falsitas dependet. Cf., David Cranston. Sequuntur abbreviationes omnium parvorum logicalium collecte a magistro Anthonio Ramirez de Villaescusa cum aliquibus divisionibus terminorum eiusdem: necnon cum tractatu terminorum magistri Davidis Cranstoni ab eodem correcto*, (Paris, ca., 1513); [sig. b 7^{rb}]. *Propositio exponibilis est propositio obscurum sensum habens ratione signi positi in ea sed secundum hanc propositionem a homo non est animal esse exponibilem et similiter quamlibet propositionem sophisticam cum quaelibet talis habeat obscurum sensum ratione alicuius termini positi in ea. Ideo aliter dicitur propositio cuius sensus est obscurus de gratia alicuius signi positi in ea venit necessario explicandus per propositionem hypotheticam vel per aliam propositionem equivalentem hypothetice. Ulterius nota quod multiplex est propositio exponibilis secundum diversitatem signorum exponibilium quia quædam signa exponibilia sunt pura syncategoramata sicut sunt signa universalia dictiones exclusivæ, reduplicativæ et exceptivæ. Alia sunt categoremata cuiusmodi sunt incipit, desinit, comparativus et superlativus, differt, infinitum, totus, et sic de aliis.*

¹⁸ George Lokert. *Termini*, [sig. c 2^r]. *Tertia divisio propositionum aliqua dicitur exponibilis illa scilicet in qua ponitur exponibile sicut est signum exclusivum, exceptivum, reduplicativum, collectivum, terminus comparativus vel superlativus, ly “incipit”, ly “desinit”, ly “mediate”, ly “differt”, et ita de quocumque alio termino faciente obscurum sensum propositionis.*

terms that immediately signify in some way and these are called purely syncategorematic terms, for example, exclusives, exceptives, and collectives; and there are those terms that include syncategoremata, for example, comparatives, superlatives, *incipit* and *desinit*. The obscure sense of an exponible proposition is removed by the expansion of the exponible into a set of propositions that are called the “exponents”. Boece is very clear when he states that the truth or falsity of an exponible proposition is judged according to its exponents because the truth of the exponible is not grasped in virtue of the supposition or the non-supposition of the extremes of the exponible proposition.¹⁹ It is evident, as Mair writes, that the terms exponible and exponent are relative and correlative terms.²⁰ I will only discuss the exponibility of *incipit*-type propositions that, like their counterparts *desinit*-type propositions, have the interesting characteristic of uniting questions of both metaphysics and logic. A proposition containing the term “begins” was treated as an exponible proposition because the term “begins” requires exposition. “Begins”, a categorematic term was said to include a syncategorematic term because it implicitly refers both to being (*esse*) and to not having been (*non-fuisse*), or, to not having been (*non-fuisse*) and will be (*fore*).²¹

It was thought that before any account of a *incipit*-type proposition could be given, the terms “immediately” and “instant” required further exposition. Time was understood as a continuum and its measure an imposition of reason. There is, between any two instants, an infinite number of instants, consequently, no two instants are contiguous. The

¹⁹ Boece. *Explicatio*, [sig. b 7^{rb}]. Dicitur “a qua” etc. quia veritas exponibilis non sumitur ex suppositione vel non suppositione extremorum.

²⁰ Mair. *Exponbilia*, [sig. ii 7^{rb}]. Et isti duo termini “exponibile” et “exponens” sunt termini relativi et correlativi.

²¹ Mair. *Exponbilia*, [sig. II 8^{ra}]. Hæc verbum “incipit” importat esse et non fuisse; vel non fuisse et fore.

difficulty is transparent. If, between any two instants there is some intermediate instant, then how is it possible to identify the first instant of something coming to be and the last instant of its non-being? The problem is even more perplexing when we take into account that any given instant is generated and destroyed at the same time.²²

Mair goes on to distinguish two kinds of instants that are applicable to inception: the first instant of being (*primum instans esse*) and the last instant of non-being (*ultimum instans non esse*):

The first instant of being (*esse*) is the instant in which it is true to say, of this or that thing, that the thing now is and was not immediately before this. This can be understood in two ways. One way, that the thing itself is at some instant and before that instant nothing of it was acquired. In another way, that the thing itself is at some instant and before that instant it was not, though something of it was. The last instant of non-being of a thing is the instant in which it is true to say of this thing that the thing now is not and immediately after this that it will be.²³

The solution that Mair ultimately provides, for both kinds of *incipit*-type propositions, is that having identified a first instant of being it is not possible to state the last instant of non-being.²⁴ This is necessary because of the assertion that time is a continuum and that between any two instants there is some mediating instant. If one were to try to identify both the first instant of being and the last instant of non-

²² Mair. *Exponbilia*, [sig. ll 8^rb]. Et instans quodlibet generatur et corrumpitur simul nec sequitur quod simul sit et non sit ut infert magister Gregorius.

²³ Mair. *Exponbilia*, [sig. ll 8^va]. Primum instans esse est instans huius rei vel illius in quo verum est dicere hæc res nunc est et non immediate ante hoc fuit. Et hoc potest dupliciter intelligi. Uno modo quod ipsum sit in aliquo instanti, et ante illud instans nihil eius fuit acquisitum. Alio modo quod ipsum sit in aliquo instanti et ante illud instans non fuit, licet aliquid eius fuerit. Ultimum instans non esse rei est instans in quo verum est dicere hæc res nunc non est et immediate post hoc erit.

²⁴ Mair. *Exponbilia*, [sig. ll 8^vb]. Notandum est quarto quod in quibuscumque rebus est dare primum instans esse in eisdem non est dare ultimum instans non esse.

being, then there would always be some mediating instant and this destroys the possibility of something coming to be in an instant. Moreover, if one identifies both the first instant of being and the last instant of non-being then being and non-being would have to coexist in the same instant which is logically impossible. After all, that an instant is simultaneously generated and destroyed does not in anyway imply an instant is and is not. That an instant seems to have some kind of duration is a fault of language that obscures the metaphysical nature of what is meant by the term “instant”. The instant at which the pilgrim begins employing reason must be identified as either the first instant at which it is true to say that the pilgrim is using reason or as the last instant at which it is true to say that the pilgrim is not using reason. Something can begin in two ways and the proper exposition of any *incipit*-type proposition into its exponents is by means of a disjunction of two conjunctions (*copulativæ*). The most fitting exposition is this: the first conjunction is composed of a positive proposition about the present and a negative proposition concerning the past. The second conjunction is composed of a positive proposition about the future and a negative proposition about the present. The term “immediate” is omitted from this account of inception and the complex term “instant that is present” (*instans quod est præsens*) is understood in a restricted sense.²⁵ The

²⁵ Mair. *Exponbilia*, [sig. mm 1^vb]. Quælibet propositio de incipit sufficienter exponitur et formaliter per disiunctivam compositam ex duabus copulativis. Quarum una erit per positionem de præsenti et remotionem de præterito; et altera per positionem de futuro et remotionem de præsenti negando istum terminum “immediate” et capiendo hoc complexum “instans quod est præsens” et hoc restrictive. Patet. Propositio non videtur aptior modus exponendi. Iterum quælibet res incipiens esse incipit per primum instans sui non esse nec est possibile quod aliter incipiat. Si primum, verificabitur per positionem de præsenti et remotionem de præterito. Si secundum, verificabitur per positionem de præsenti et per consequens totus ambitus verificationis continebitur in disiunctiva illa composita ex illis duabus copulativis. Et contra. Nisi sit impedimentum per terminos discretos vel per aliquam determinationem quod cavetur sic exponendo (iudicio meo) ut verbi causa: A incipit esse; ergo in instanti quod est præsens est et A non immediate ante instans quod est præsens

exposition of an *incipit*-type proposition may be hindered by the presence of certain terms. In this context Mair makes a special mention of propositions containing discrete terms²⁶ and claims that these kinds of proposition require a different kind of exposition.²⁷ The proposition, “The first instant at which the pilgrim begins using reason” is expounded in this way: The pilgrim at the present instant is employing reason and it is not the case that immediately before the present instant the pilgrim was employing reason, or the pilgrim immediately after the present instant will be employing reason and it is not the case that the pilgrim at the present instant is employing reason. It is important to note the subtle attention that Mair devoted to logical and philosophical detail since it is constantly presenting itself in theological statements such as the one we have just considered: “The state of the pilgrim meriting blessedness begins either from the first instant he employs reason, or from the last instant in which he does not use reason until the time the pilgrim has reached the end.”

THE PILGRIM DEFINED AS MATTER AND FORM

The ultimate end of the pilgrim is to enter into a state of blessedness upon death, that is, to gain a direct and immediate insight into the nature of God which is not naturally possible in this lifetime. Mair favoured a hylomorphic theory of being which maintained that the nature of the substantial union of soul and body expresses a general relationship of actuality to potentiality. In this instance the dichotomy is

fuit; vel A immediate post instans quod est præsens erit et A in instanti quod est præsens non est.

²⁶ John Mair. *Termini* in *In Petri Hispani summulas*, [sig. b 4^{rb}]. A discrete term, also known as a singular term, was explained by Mair as follows: *Terminus eo dicitur singularis quia ei repugnat secundum acceptionem secundum quam accipitur sumi pro pluribus ut ista animalia demonstrando “omnia animalia in mundi”*.

²⁷ The precise nature of the difficulty is explained in Mair. *Exponibilia*, [sig. mm 5^{rb}- mm 5^{va}].

expressed in the relationship of form to matter. There is no sign of any great innovation when Mair defines the pilgrim as “*anima informans corpus*”. It is the detailed exposition of this concept that is interesting. The pilgrim *qua homo* is a composite of soul (*anima*) and body (*corpus*). “Socrates is a pilgrim and not a pilgrim because he is body *qua* matter (*corpus*) and soul *qua* form (*anima*)”. Socrates is not a pilgrim solely *qua corpus* nor is Socrates a pilgrim solely *qua anima*. The pilgrim is a complex unity of soul and body and Socrates is only a pilgrim *qua anima informans corpus* (soul informing body). Hence the paradoxical conclusion that Socrates is a pilgrim and is not a pilgrim.²⁸ The answer to this dilemma will be suggested shortly.²⁹ The immediate question is whether the soul directly informs the body as prime matter or whether it is necessary to attribute to body its own specific form of corporeity (*forma corporeitatis*). There was universal concern among late-medieval philosophers and theologians over the question of whether each creature had just one form or whether there was a plurality of forms in one and the same being.³⁰ The issue was the subject of much controversy because of its implications for the way in which the theological question of transubstantiation was to be understood, but that is a separate issue for the purposes of this discussion.

²⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{rb}]. ...Sortes est viator et non viator: quia est corpus et anima. Et anima informans corpus est viatrix cum sit in statu merendi sibi beatitudinem.

²⁹ See p. 38.

³⁰ John Mair. *In secundum Sententiarum*, d. 15, q. 2; (Paris, 1519); [fol. 92^{va}]. ...An in homine in sexto die creato sit alia forma ab anima intellectiva. Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 95^{ra}]. Variæ sunt philosophorum sententiæ recitatæ de unitate vel pluralitate formarum. Cf., Mair. *In secundum Sententiarum*, (Paris, 1528); d. 15 q. 2; [fol. 46^{va}]. Quæritur utrum in homine in sexto die creato sit alia forma quam anima intellectiva. Et pro brevi responsione sit hæc conclusio. In nullo composito est aliqua forma substantialis nisi una.

PLURALISM REFUTED

Mair begins by commenting on several arguments in favour of positing a plurality of substantial forms in a composite being. The first position claims that “there are as many forms in a composite being as are essentially predicated in respect of a pronoun indicating the thing”.³¹ This position draws attention to the important distinction between metaphysical and logical discourse. Metaphysics discusses the nature of a human being in terms of matter and form. Logic, on the other hand uses a very different vocabulary and forces one to make the distinction between matter and form in terms of subject and predicate. Metaphysics is necessarily bound to and limited by the requirements of good logical expression. The distinction between matter and form *via* the distinction between subject and predicate is readily communicated in the context of a categorical proposition such as: “*Homo est rationalis*” where “*rationalis*” is predicated of the subject “*homo*” and indicates a category of things of which it is true to say: “This is rational” where “this” refers to the subject “*homo*”. Despite its clarity of expression the claim that there are as many forms in a composite as there are predicates of a pronoun representing a composite is rejected. Mair explains that if there is an infinite number of categorical forms in a composite then it follows that there would an infinite number of categorical forms in Socrates.³² This quite simply is unacceptable. If we grant that Socrates is a man and that to be a man is to be an animal then “there is one form by which Socrates is Socrates, another form by which Socrates is a man and yet another by which Socrates is an animal.”³³ This is only the

³¹ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 92^{va}]. ...tot sunt formæ in composito quot sunt prædicata essentialia dicibilia de pronomine rem demonstrante ut una forma qua Sortes est Sortes, et qua est homo, et qua est animal.

³² Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 92^{va}]. Ex hac opinione correlarium infero ab ea negandum, hoc scilicet, quod sunt infinitæ formæ categorematicæ in Sorte.

³³ For the Latin see fn. 31.

beginning: in order to give an appropriate description of the composite substance that is known as “Socrates” it would necessary to give a description of Socrates which includes a reference to all categorical forms present in Socrates. It would not be possible to give an adequate metaphysical description of Socrates because the number of forms predicable under this situation could never be exhaustive. It would always be possible to identify another quality that Socrates possesses in virtue of a corresponding form and this would lead to a multiplication of forms beyond necessity which destroys the possibility of achieving a good metaphysical or logical definition.

Another way of conceiving the union of soul and body is to posit three really and specifically distinct forms in man, that is, the form of corporeity (*forma corporeitatis*), the sensitive soul (*anima sensitiva*) and the intellectualive soul (*anima intellectiva*).³⁴ The form of corporeity is the form in virtue of which a body is a body and is something distinct from the intellectualive soul, the form in virtue of which a body is the specific form of human being in virtue of which a someone is said to be alive and rational. The sensitive soul is the form in virtue of which a body is said to be sentient. Mair rejects this version of the pluralist argument on several grounds. The first objection is that the initial tripartite division is insufficient because it ignores the really and specifically distinct existence of the vegetative soul.³⁵ Mair seems to have in mind that if one is going to make a distinction between the sensitive and the intellectualive souls because of their different functions then it is necessary

³⁴ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 92^{va-vb}]. Secunda via est quod in homine est triplex forma realiter distincta, scilicet forma corporeitatis anima sensitiva et anima intellectiva. Et istæ tres realiter et specie distinguuntur.

³⁵ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 92^{vb}]. Sed contra hanc positionem arguitur. [See fn. 34.] Illa positio eodem modo debet ponere quattuor formas in homine sicut una alia opinio circa quam non insisto ponit scilicet animam vegetativam distinctam a sensitiva et intellectiva.

to introduce a vegetative soul in order to account for basic biological processes such as growth and decay, reproduction and nutrition. One might conceivably reply that the vegetative soul is “virtually” contained in the intellective and sensitive soul and that any further distinction is an empty or trivial one.³⁶ This too is problematic. Mair writes that “if the intellective includes the sensitive, then the sensitive is useless.”³⁷ This objection has two components. First, if the intellective soul includes the sensitive soul virtually, that is, in such a way that the sensitive soul is subordinated to the intellective soul; then there is no reason why the sensitive soul should be posited as something really distinct; in fact, such a positing is trivial. The second component of Mair’s objection is premised on the assumption that if we postulate the existence of two really distinct souls in a human being, such as the intellective soul and the sensitive soul; then, that same subject is simultaneously both an animal and a human being. Thus, in so far as a subject is said to have an intellective soul it is really and properly called a human being and to the extent that the same subject possesses a sensitive soul it is really an “animal”. Moreover, if one additionally posits a vegetative soul then the same subject is really a man, an animal, and a plant conjointly.³⁸ This is

³⁶ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 92^vb]. Sed hic diceret quod intellectiva et sensitiva virtualiter vegetativam includunt et per consequens ipsa esset inanis.

³⁷ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 92^vb]. Contra. Sic intellectiva includit sensitivam; ergo inutilis est sensitiva.

³⁸ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 92^vb]. Secundo ex positione sequitur quod homo ex bruto et homine conflatur quod est absurdum concessum. Et si ponatur anima vegetativa sequitur quod homo esset plantam, brutum et hoc copulativum. Note: It was common when discussing the conjunction “and” to distinguish between *copulative* and *copulativum*. Robert Caubraith, *Quadrupertitum in oppositiones, conversiones, hypotheticas et modales Magistri Roberti Caubraith omnem ferme difficultatem dialecticam enodans*, (Paris, 1510); [fol. 80^{ra}]. Pernotandum est illam coniunctionem et bifariam accipi copulative videlicet et copulativum. Primo modo coniungit inter propositiones sensum hypotheticum reddens. Secundo vero modo inter terminos sensum categoricum constituens. “The conjunction “and” is to be understood in two ways, namely, conjunctively (*copulative*) and conjointly (*copulativum*). In the first way it connects propositions turning them into a molecular (*hypotheticum*) proposition. In the second way it connects terms and constitutes a categorematic

not acceptable because more should not be posited than is necessary, and since the dynamic nature of a human being can be explained in virtue of an intellective soul informing body it is superfluous to posit any other animating principle. Mair is also anxious to reject this way of distinguishing between the intellective, sensitive and vegetative souls because he thinks that positing any form over and above the intellective soul stands to impair its functioning. Mair, in another place, writes: Socrates is an animal, a human being, and a substance by means of the same form. Insofar as he is risible he is a human being and not an animal and Socrates insofar as he is sensitive he is an animal and not risible.³⁹

A third consequence which Mair rejects as inconsistent, despite its acceptance by many, is the obvious inference that in positing a plurality of forms the same matter is informed by several really distinct forms.⁴⁰ It stands to reason that according to one who accepts that the body has a form of corporeity “the intellective soul has in the first instance a perfectible body composed of matter and a form of corporeity: in this way one can say that the intellective soul has a two-fold composition of matter and a sensitive soul which is perfectible from the first instance.”⁴¹ This is undesirable because such a division implies that several really

term.” It is useful to keep this distinction. See Broadie. *The Circle of John Mair*, [p. 151].

³⁹ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15 q. 2; [fol. 94^{vb}]. Sortes per eandem formam est animal homo et substantia. Et tamen est risibilis secundum quod homo et non secundum quod animal et sensitivus secundum quod animal et quod non risibilis secundum quod animal.

⁴⁰ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15 q. 2; [fol. 92^{vb}]. Tertio ex positione sequitur quod plures formæ informant eandem materiam: quod est inconveniens. Sed hæc ratio repueretur a multis.

⁴¹ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15 q. 2; [fol. 92^{vb}]. Ut patet de ponentibus formam corporeitatis sicut ipsi dicunt. Anima intellectiva habet pro primo perfectibili corpus compositum ex materia et forma corporeitatis. Sic ipse potest dicere quod anima intellectiva habet binarium ex materia et anima sensitiva pro primo perfectibili. Vel dicere potest libere utraque illarum informat eandem materiam immediate, sicut alii libere et rationabiliter consequenter dicere possunt quod anima intellectiva et forma corporeitatis informant eandem materiam.

distinct forms inform the same matter. He continues that on the foregoing account one is entitled to say that the intellective soul, the sensitive soul and the form of corporeity directly inform the same matter. Mair is brief, to the point of omission, as to why this account is unsatisfactory. Of all the unlikely allies it is probable that Mair is following the lead of Thomas Aquinas in his rejection of the doctrine of a plurality of forms inhering in the human composite. Aquinas thought that the unitary nature of a composite substance was threatened by a diversity of constituents. He argued that if one grants that it is form that perfects matter then, if the intellective soul enters into matter previously organized by either the form of corporeity and/or the sensitive soul, then the intellective soul does not uniquely determine the existence of the substance. Therefore, it is not a substantial form. Moreover, on the basis of this, it is possible to conclude that the intellective and other souls are in some way accidental to substance and hence separable from substance.⁴²

MAIR'S ARGUMENT FOR THE UNITARY NATURE OF COMPOSITE BEINGS

The number of pluralist accounts concerning the nature of the human composite to which Mair attends is testimony to its popularity and to the quality of its advocates. Mair's defense of the unitary nature of the human composite would have been at one time a minority report but had widespread support among the members of his circle.⁴³ Mair's

⁴² Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiæ*, Prima Pars, q. 76, a. 3, ad 4.

⁴³ I give two examples. George Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, (Paris, 1514); [sig. a 7^vb]. Nominales moderniores ponunt eadem rem, scilicet, animam rationalem esse potentiam sensitivam et intellectivam in homine licet illi termini habent diversas rationes. William Manderston. *Bipartitum in morali philosophia*, (Paris, 1517); [sig. k 3^vb]. An in homine sunt ponendæ tres animæ distinctæ realiter. Respondetur breviter relictæ opinionum pluralitate quod eadem res numero in homine dicitur anima rationalis, anima sensitiva, et anima vegetativa diversis tamen rationibus propter diversas operationes quas nata est exercere.

argument for the unity of form in human beings begins with the qualified acceptance of a thesis he attributes to Alexander of Hales and to Thomas Aquinas: in any composite being there is only one form in virtue of which we identify the composite as a specific substance and this is the substantial form (*forma substantialis*).⁴⁴ The further determinations of a composite substance such as the accidental properties, quality and quantity, that are ascribed to a substance are said to inhere in the composite in virtue of an accidental form (*forma accidentalis*). Mair writes: “In a human being there is one form. And a human being is the most perfect of animals. And if one form suffices for the most perfect of animals, then one form will suffice for that which is less perfect. Though this issue is taken up specifically with regard to human beings some descriptions are universal concerning a form [viz., substantial form] that is held in common.”⁴⁵ At the heart of this claim is the conviction that more should not be posited where fewer will suffice. It is possible to preserve the diversity of human nature because the same form can be responsible for diverse operations. Mair discussed the subject as follows:

...anything composed of matter and form in whatever way substantial is a substance and is extended. Since it is not incorporeal and a spirit it is therefore a corporeal substance. Therefore it is a body. Therefore [in the case of human nature] it is not reasonable to posit a form of corporeity apart from the intellective soul. And insofar as it is a body it is also an animal. This is obvious. It is a human being

⁴⁴ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15 q. 2; [fol. 93^{ra}]. Quarto est opinio quam tenet Alexander Hallensis in Secunda Parte 62 et utrobique sequitur Sanctus Thomas quam solam teneo. Et propterea ponitur hæc conclusio. In nullo composito est aliqua forma substantialis nisi una.

⁴⁵ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15 q. 2; [fol. 93^{ra}]. Probatio. In homine est sola una forma. Et homo est perfectissimum animalium. Et si ad perfectissimum animalium una forma sufficiat ad imperfectiora una satis erit. Prosequatur materia de homine, licet aliquæ rationes sint universales circa formam in communi.

since it is a rational substance. Therefore the substance is an animal. By the same form, also indivisible, it is a human being, an animal, a body, etc. Moreover, it should be thought to be incongruous that a human being is a human being [and] an animal and a plant conjointly. Therefore it should not be less incongruous to concede this: Socrates is a man, a stone, or any other inanimate being. That Socrates is a man and not a man is not in doubt since he is Socrates and his matter which is not a man. But matter alone does not belong to any determinate species of being since it does not have form as a part of it.⁴⁶

Mair explicitly rejects the need for the form of corporeity as an intermediate form that stands between form and prime matter. He adopts in its place the substantial union of body and form. The detailing of the relationship of form to matter *qua* the relationship of soul to body begins with the comment that Socrates is both a human being and not a human being. Socrates is a human being *qua* human being, that is, *qua anima intellectiva* or as the union of soul and body. In the absence of this union there is only a material substratum which in the state of being uninformed is indeterminate and unspecified. It is possible for matter to stand devoid of any substantial or accidental form only under extraordinary circumstances as ordained by the absolute power of God (*potentia Dei absoluta*).⁴⁷ Mair like almost all medieval philosophers

⁴⁶ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 93ra-rb]. ...quod aliquid est compositum ex materia et forma quacumque substantiali est substantia et extensa. Quia non est incorporea et spiritus, ergo substantia corporea. Ergo est corpus. Ergo non oportet ponere aliam formam corporeitatis ab anima intellectiva. Et sicut est corpus, ita est animal. Patet. Est homo cum est substantia rationalis. Ergo est animal. Ab eadem forma etiam indivisibili est homo animal corpus et cætera. Insuper absonum reputari debet quod homo est homo, brutum, et planta copulatum. Ergo non minus absonum debet reputari concedere hanc: Sortes est homo, lapis, vel aliquod ens pertinens ad speciem inanimati. Quod Sortes sit homo et non homo non est dubium: cum est Sortes et sua materia quæ est non homo. Sed materia sola non pertinet ad aliquam determinatam speciem entis cum nec habeat formam tamquam partem eius.

⁴⁷ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 12, q. 1; [fol. 63va]. Et pono conclusiones quarum prima est: Deus potest facere materiam sine forma substantiali. Probatio. Quandocumque sunt duæ res creatæ quarum neutra est pars alterius Deus potest quacumque illarum rerum producere sine reliqua, sed materia et forma realiter

provides three principles applicable to natural things: matter, form, and privation. Mair notes his disagreement with Aquinas, who despite his affirmation that form and matter were distinct principles of natural things, thought that it was not possible for matter to exist without form because this implied a logical contradiction which is the only limit on the power of God.⁴⁸ The contradiction, according to Aquinas, amounts to this: God, the creator is the most perfect active cause hence anything created by God does not lack a form.⁴⁹ He continues: “to exist” involves actuality and this implies to have a form. Therefore, to say that matter exists without form is to say that there is an actual being without actuality which is a contradiction.⁵⁰ The basic assumption underlying this position is that uninformed matter lacks positive being of its own, it is in some way deprived of existence. This solution proved to be wholly unsatisfactory to Mair who thought that matter and form were indeed separable if only *de potentia Dei absoluta*. It prompted the question: How could something lacking positive being in its own right contribute to the existence of a composite being? Mair writes: “form is really

distinguuntur et utraque creatura; ergo Deus potest producere materiam sine forma. Mair. *In secundum*, d. 12, q. 1; [fol. 64^{ra}]. Secunda conclusio. Materia potest esse sine forma accidentali. Probatio. Materia potest esse sine forma substantiali ex præcedenti conclusione. Ergo materia eadem potest esse sine forma accidentali.

⁴⁸ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 12, q. 1; [fol. 64^{ra}]. Contra priorem conclusionem arguitur argumentis Sancti Thomæ et Durandi quibus probare satagunt, Deus non potest facere illud quod contradictionem implicat. Materiam esse sine forma substantiali implicat [contradictionem]. Igitur consequentia tenet cum maiore. Minorem probat Sanctus Thomas in Prima Parte Quæstione 66 Articulo Primo. Materia non potest esse nisi sit in actu. Non potest esse in actu sine forma. In argumentum hoc dilutum est quæstione præcedentis, nec habet colorem recte dicit Gregorius in 12 Distinctione: rationes Sancti Thomæ modicum valent. For the full text of Gregory of Rimini's discussion of the inadequacy of the opinion of Thomas Aquinas see Gregory of Rimini. *Gregorii Ariminensis OESA Lectura super primum et secundum sententiarum* (7 Volumes), ed. A. Damasus Trapp OSA, Venicio Marcolino, Manuel Santos-Noya, (Berlin/New York, 1979-1987); [Volume 5, pp. 285-288; n.b. 287-288].

⁴⁹ Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiæ*, Prima Pars, q. 66, a. 1, ad 4

⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiæ*, Prima Pars, q. 66, a. 1, R.

distinct from matter. Proof: Matter alone is produced in creation. Form is produced naturally and is actualized from the potential of matter.”⁵¹

It may be objected that granted that matter is potentiality and form is actuality, then it is simply impossible that matter is something actual. Mair as part of his solution distinguishes between objective and subjective potentiality a distinction popularized by John Duns Scotus.⁵² The distinction between subjective and objective potentiality, as it was understood by Mair, is explained in the following way: If matter is said to have only objective potentiality then matter is understood to be in the potential for existence but is, as yet, not actual. However, to claim that matter is the fitting subject of change is to state that it has subjective potentiality and this does not conflict with the simultaneous claim that matter actually exists.⁵³ Matter in this sense is said to have objective potentiality insofar as it can receive a determining substantial form. Matter, in this sense, has positive existence and is the fitting subject for receiving a substantial form. Mair issues a *caveat* explaining that appropriately and according to common usage that matter is not held to be in act. Matter is called “potentiality” because it actualizes nothing but is able to receive a range of forms. Form always actualizes apart

⁵¹ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 12, q. 1; [fol. 63^{ra}]. Forma realiter distinguitur a materia. Probatur hæc conclusio. Materia sola in creatione producitur. Forma naturaliter producitur et educitur de potentia materiæ.

⁵² John Duns Scotus. *Opera Omnia Tomus 12. Quæstiones in Secundum Sententiarum*, ed. Lucas Wadding, (Paris, 1639); d. 12, q. 1; [p. 556]. Aliquid enim potest esse in potentia dupliciter: uno modo ut terminus; alio modo ut subiectum, et forte est eadem potentia, sed ut comparata ad diversa dicitur subiectiva vel obiectiva, ita quod subiectum existens dicitur in potentia subiectiva, et eadem ut respicit agens, dicitur obiectiva; possunt tamen separari; ut in creabili, ubi est potentia obiectiva et non subiectiva quia ibi non subiicitur aliquid. See also *Opera Omnia Tomus VII. In XII Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, ed. Lucas Wadding, (Paris, 1639); [p. 536].

⁵³ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 12, q. 1; [fol. 63^{rb}]. Materia vocatur in potentia, primo *Physicorum* [192^a2-31], et forma actus; ergo nullomodo materia est actus. Respondetur distinguendo quod materia sit in potentia, vel in potentia obiectiva tantum, et sic nego. Solum illud est in potentia obiectiva tantum quod non est et potest esse. Esse in potentia subiectiva non repugnat actuali existentia.

from the intellective soul and it is on account of this that form is called “act”.⁵⁴ Matter is not a privation of being and exists on its own, as the underlying substratum of inherence necessary for the existence of both substantial and accidental forms. It is a positive principle and can thus contribute to the existence of the composite. The paradox which was introduced above that “Socrates is and is not a pilgrim because he is body and soul” can now be resolved. Socrates is a pilgrim only as the substantial union of the intellective soul and body, or as expressed above, as *anima informans corpus*. Socrates is not a pilgrim *qua* body because strictly speaking a body not in substantial union with an intellective soul is not a human body at all. The point that Mair is attempting to emphasize is that soul and body inhere in the same subject and are one substance. Mair concludes that the right way to consider the union of body and soul is as a unity and to posit one form in a substance *per se* in virtue of which the whole is called one.

It might be objected against the unitarian account of the nature of a composite being that the same form is responsible for a number of diverse operations. In the case of human beings one might think it impossible that the intellective soul is responsible for both the pursuit of and the flight from an object of desire. This objection is almost certainly a version of one of the proofs that William of Ockham offers in favour of positing a plurality of substantial forms in the human composite.⁵⁵ The perceived difficulty is: if the same object is desired according to the

⁵⁴ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 12, q. 1; [fol. 63^{rb}]. *Appropriate et in communi usu non dicitur actus. Vocatur potentia quia nihil actualit sed cæteras formas in se recipit. Forma semper actualit extra animam intellectivam propterea vocatur actus.*

⁵⁵ Marilyn McCord Adams. *William Ockham* (2 Volumes), (Notre Dame, 1987); [p. 657]. *William of Ockham: Quodlibetal Questions* (2 Volumes), eds. and trans., Alfred J. Freddoso & Francis E. Kelley, (New Haven, 1991); [pp. 132-136]; William of Ockham [Guillelmi de Ockham]. *Opera Theologica. Tomus IX, Quodlibeta Septem*, ed. Joseph C. Wey, (Bonaventure, 1980); [p. 156 line 4 to p. 158 line 40].

sensitive appetite and, at the same time, not desired according to the rational appetite then there results in the subject a natural opposition between willing and not-willing the same object. Ockham confessed that it was difficult to prove that there was a plurality of forms in the human composite, or in fact in any composite being because such a position was not established upon self-evident propositions. Nevertheless, he argued that it was impossible for two contradictory states, i.e., desiring and not-desiring, to exist in the same subject but he maintained that it was at the same time obvious that acts of desiring and acts of resisting were to be found co-existing in the human composite in the state of nature. This implied for Ockham that there were really different substantial forms in order to account for these very different powers. Mair continues, in phrasing which closely parallels that of Ockham, that this objection is thought to be confirmed because its proponents argue that the same power cannot be responsible for choosing the same object both naturally *via* the sensitive appetite and freely in virtue of the rational appetite. Hence, there can be no doubt that it is necessary to grant that there are two subjects or two *loci* for the different kinds of acts or appetites, one subject being the sensitive soul and the other the rational or intellective soul.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 94^{rb}]. Iam arguitur contra eandem conclusionem (viz., quod in nullo composito est aliqua forma substantialis nisi una) probando quod sit una anima sensitiva ab intellectiva distincta. Et erit decimum argumentum quo sic arguitur impossibile est naturaliter qualitates contrarias esse in eodem subiecto. Sed actus appetendi aliquid renuendi sunt contrarii. Et tamen sunt simul per te, si sit nisi una anima in homine. Appetitus sensitivus desiderat cum obiecto ei convenienti coniungi: ut comedendo cibum vetitum. Appetitus rationalis illud obiectum renuit. Confirmatur hæc ratio. Eadem potentia non simul elicit idem obiectum naturaliter et libere. Sed appetitus sensitivus appetit aliquod obiectum naturaliter. Et appetitus libere illi conformiter appetit, interdum conformiter secundum rectam rationem nonnunquam difformiter non refert. Ergo oportet dare duo subiecta istorum actuum quorum alter naturaliter et alter libere elicitur. Ad hoc potest introduci Aristoteles 3 *De Anima* dicens in eodem sunt appetitus contrarii.

Mair, like Walter Chatton one of Ockham's early critics, is unsympathetic to this position.⁵⁷ Mair insists, as Ockham had, that the sensation of the appetitive act inheres in the human composite, in other words, in the aggregate, that is the total human being made up of body, understood as instrument (*organum*), and of soul.⁵⁸ He argues against his objector that the acts of sensitive appetite and rational appetite are not naturally opposed, and distinguishes between different modes of apprehending the same object as both desirable and undesirable. The power of sensation informing the sensitive appetite and the power of intellection informing the intellectual appetite are posited as the modes in which an object is apprehended as both desirable and undesirable without any natural contrariety. Moreover even at the most basic level of sense—apprehension there is no possibility of contrariety unless the same object is perceived as agreeable and disagreeable in virtue of the same sense-organ.⁵⁹ Mair writes that “acts of desiring and of fleeing the same object apprehended by different senses stand together and are not opposed.”⁶⁰ He claims that both of these arguments are firmly grounded

⁵⁷ The response of Walter Chatton to Ockham is discussed in Adams. *William Ockham*, [pp. 657-658]. See also *William of Ockham: Quodlibetal Questions*, [pp. 132-136]. Ockham. *Quodlibeta Septem*, [pp. 156-157].

⁵⁸ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 94^{rb}]. Respondeo. Hæc argumenta [See fn. 56] non habent colorem contra hoc quod tenere intendo in sequentibus; puta quod sensatio actus appetitus sensitivi inhæret aggregato ex organo et anima.

⁵⁹ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 94^{rb-va}]. Actus isti [viz., acts of desiring and acts of fleeing] de quibus fit mentio non inhærent eidem subiecto primo. Et per consequens inter illos non est contrarietas. Contraria sunt nata circa idem (ex *Prædicamentis*). Sed adhuc istud non tenendo argumenta non concludunt. Tenendo quod sensatio, intellectio, appetitio sensitiva, et appetitio intellectiva animæ inhærent tanquam suo subiecto; primo concedo maiorem argumenti: ad minorem dico quod ipsa est vera quando sequuntur eandem apprehensionem. Secus est si diversas apprehensiones sequantur. Modo actus appetitus sensitivi sequitur sensationem; actus appetitus intellectivi sequitur rationem* causa quare vocantur appetitus sensitivus et intellectivus. Modo isti actus non sunt contrarii sed actus sensitivus obiecti appetitivus contrariantur actui sensitivo renuendi idem obiecto. Et hoc si fuerit secundum eundem sensum. *I am reading “sequitur rationem” for “sive rationama” which is almost certainly a printer's error.

⁶⁰ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 94^{va}]. Actus appetendi et refugiendi idem obiectum diversis sensibus apprehensum stant simul et non sunt contrarii. Patet

in experience and provides two illustrations. It is obvious that the intellective and sensitive appetites are not opposed. The cat is hungry and desires the fish which in the past has satisfied its hunger, but the fish is in water which the cat does not want to touch. It is possible to say that the cat desires the fish in virtue of the intellect but that the cat is averse to the sensation of water on its paws. Perhaps this position can be criticized as being anthropomorphic because one can deny that a cat has any true cognitive capacity. However, though not without its objectors, we must not forget that it was commonly thought by medieval philosophers that animals had a material intellect and that they were capable of engaging in some kind of reasoning. Mair and his colleagues customarily distinguished between the intellective soul (*anima intellectiva*) as the specific form attributable only to human beings and *anima* as a cognitive power (*potentia cognitiva*) that includes the material intellect of animals. Nevertheless, Mair provides another more interesting illustration: It is common-place that on the basis of sensation the sun is judged to be smaller than the earth but that the intellect judges the sun to be larger. The initial judgment of the sun being smaller than the earth gives way and is replaced by the proper judgment of the

experimento. Si carnem multum calidam famenti catto porrexeris gustus catti appetit et ad carnem accedit gustu cattus allectus ut eam capiat. Sed tactus abhorret. Et pro tempore prope carnem comminus sedendo carnem renuit. Sic de pisce in aqua secundum carmen vulgare. Cattus vult piscem sed non vult tangere limpham. Sic de medio sensus et intellectus potest dici. Ut iudicando secundum sensum solem minorem terra et secundum intellectum maiorem quousque iudicium sensus intellectus corrupuerit sicut actus rationalis potest removere actum sensualitatis cui non formaliter contrariantur sed solum virtualiter. Proportionaliter actus intellectivus unus alteri contrariatur quando uterque est liber et in idem obiectum latus vel a principio libero productus. Actus naturaliter continuatus qui a principio libero procedit de prosecutione "a" obiecti contrariantur renutioni libere eiusdem obiecti. Hoc non obstante actus unus sensus qui est prosecutivus "a" obiecti et intellectus qui est fugitivus eiusdem possunt dici virtualiter contrarii pro quanto diversificandi in idem obiectum tendunt unus proseguendo et alter fugiendo. Et sic unus illorum alium corrumpit in aliquo tempore secundum activitatem et resistantiam unius alterius. Sicut forma substantialis aquæ corrumpit quem secum pro tempore compatitur. Secum virtualiter. Licet formaliter. Pro ista solvitur argumentum et dictum Aristotelis in 3 *De Anima*.

intellect. He claims that in a similar way “a rational act is able to remove a sensual act to which it is not formally opposed but only virtually opposed”.⁶¹ Mair continues:

the act of one sense which is pursuant of object “a” and the act of intellect which flees the same object can be said to be virtually opposed insofar as they are different and are directed to the same object with one of them pursuing and the other fleeing from it. And thus one of them destroys the other at some time according to the activity and resistance of the other.⁶²

The suggestion is that the less intense and resistant appetite would give way to the more intense and resistant. The intense sensation of gustatory satisfaction one receives from drinking *aqua vitæ* may give way to an intellectual prohibition since one reacts adversely to *aqua vitæ*. It is quite feasible for the same subject to experience both desire and aversion with regard to the same object but desire and aversion stand virtually opposed because the same object cannot be both pursued and avoided in virtue of the same appetite.

Mair now turns his attention to two different ways in which the same cognitive power can relate to various objects as testimony to the claim that the same power can be responsible for a diversity of operations:

The same power in respect of the same object has an intuitive and abstractive notion, a judicative and apprehensive; not judicative, sensitive and intellective. Moreover, the soul naturally understands an object and wills the same object freely. Similarly an act of will is naturally produced by a free act. For example, one who efficiently wishes an end and knows that “a” is the only

⁶¹ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 94^{va}]. For the Latin see fn. 60.

⁶² Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 94^{va}]. For the Latin see fn. 60.

way naturally possible wills that way and is able to will the same freely.⁶³

There is ultimately nothing incongruous in the same power being the author of diverse activities. The diversity of operations is therefore insufficient to establish the existence of a diverse number of powers. Moreover, howsoever diverse the operations may be this does not permit one to conclude that there is a diversity of substantial forms in a complete being (*suppositum*).⁶⁴ Mair encapsulates his lengthy exposition in favour of the unitarian position as follows:

There are various opinions of philosophers concerning the unity or the plurality of forms of which the more appropriate I think is that which posits one form in one complete being *per se* (*suppositum per se*) by which the whole is called one. I do not speak about the absolute power of God. I believe that He is able to make as many forms as He wishes to inform one matter.⁶⁵

Reminiscent of the doubt confessed by Ockham at the beginning of his proof in favour of the plurality of substantial forms, the admission that a plurality of forms could inhere in one form by means of the absolute power of God acknowledges that the case in favour of the unitarian position is also difficult to prove.

⁶³ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 94^{va}]. Ad confirmationem nego eam. [See fn. 56.] Eadem potentia respectu eiusdem obiecti habet notitiam intuitivam et abstractivam, iudicativam et apprehensivam. Non iudicativam, sensitivam et intellectivam. Præterea anima intelligit obiectum naturaliter et idem vult libere. Similiter voluntas habet unum actum naturaliter productum ab actu libero. Ut qui efficaciter vult finem et scit "a" medium solum possibile naturaliter tunc voluntas vult tale medium et potest idem libere velle.

⁶⁴ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 94^{vb}-95^{ra}]. Habere diversitatem non arguit sufficienter diversitatem potentiæ... Sed quantumcumque sunt diversæ in eodem supposito non concluditur formarum substantialium diversitas quia non repugnat ut nuperrime diximus eidem formæ substantiali habere dissimiles operationes [et] qualitates.

⁶⁵ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 15, q. 2; [fol. 95^{ra}]. Quæstionem paucis ob eius prolixitatem colligam. Variæ sunt philosophorum sententiæ recitatæ de unitate vel pluralitate formarum. Quarum rectiorem puta (=puto) viam illam quæ ponit unam formam in uno supposito per se a qua totum denominatur unum. Non loquor de potentia Dei. Credo quod potest facere tot formas quot vult unam materiam informare.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE OF MIND

ANIMA INTELLECTIVA—THE SPECIFIC FORM OF HUMAN BEINGS

Though there is some reluctance to declare that the unitarian position is the right one there is no hesitation while introducing a discussion concerning the immortality of the soul when Mair claims that the natural light of reason reveals to us that the human intellect is the specific form of the human body.⁶⁶ The theological question of the immortality of the intellective soul in human beings introduces a distinction between the intellective soul as a principle of animation and the intellective soul as a principle of operation. The embodied intellective soul as the first principle of animation, as that which gives life to body, was thought to be separable from the body and was therefore immortal. However, immortality was denied to the intellective soul which, as a principle of operation, was capable of acts of intellection and volition. It was the intellective soul separated from the

⁶⁶ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 18, q. 4; [fol. 104^{va}]. Intellectus est forma corporis humani. Aristoteles dicit 2 *De Anima*: Anima est actus primus corporis physici organici in potentiam vitam habentis. Insuper hoc intelligitur realiter; ergo habet intellectum tanquam partem eius; non intelligit per materiam nec per formam corporeitatis vel sensitivam (si ponatur); ergo intelligitur per animam intellectivam. Insuper ponit beatitudinem hominis in speculatione intellectus consistere decimo *Ethicorum*: dicit: Illud non fieret si anima non esset pars hominis. Et nono *Ethicorum*: dicit: ad hominem pertinet corpus humanum et anima intellectiva. Perpetuitas animæ est nota ex verbis Christi dicentis: nolite timere eos qui corpus occidunt, animam autem non possunt occidere. Et Aristoteles ex separatione animæ a corpore quoad operationem; hoc est, intellectionem vel volitionem, concludit quod anima potest separari a corpore. Mair. *In quartum*, d. 43, q. 2; [fol. 329^{rb}]. Intellectus humanus est forma corpus informans... Anima est actus primus corporis physici organici in potentiam vitam habentis. Mair. *In quartum*, d. 43, q. 2; [fol. 330^{vb}]. Primo notum est in lumine naturali quod anima est forma corporis ipsum informans.

activity of intellection and volition that was immortal. In order to distinguish these two aspects of the intellective soul it will be helpful to introduce some terminology. I will now translate the term *anima* as “mind” to refer exclusively to the human intellective soul capable of acts of understanding and acts of will. This is desirable in order to avoid confusion with the broader sense of “*anima*” as a “principle of animation” that may be attributed equally to plants, animals, and humans. The term “*anima*” when used in this way implies something quite different than the term “mind” as a principle of operation. The term “mind” will also be used to avoid any implication of immortality normally associated with the term “soul”. The next crucial consideration is: What is the nature of mind? Mair puts forward the following two questions for consideration: Is the essence of mind distinct from its powers? and How are the essence of mind and its powers related to one another?⁶⁷

SOME RELEVANT MEANINGS OF THE TERM “POWER”

The history of the various meanings imposed on the term “power” (*potentia*) is complex. It is not surprising that Mair offers a brief review of what he takes to be the most relevant definitions of “power” before proceeding to the analysis of the controversy surrounding the nature of mind. The first definition he provides is that of Aristotle as it is given in the *Metaphysics* where “power” is resolved into the active and the passive. Mair reports that Aristotle also distinguished between power in terms of “inability” (*inhabilitas*) and “power” as that which is “incapable of suffering” (*impassibilis*) by which Mair understands the qualitative disposition according to which a subject is able to resist being

⁶⁷ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 95^{rb}]. Quomodo essentia animæ et eius potentia inter se habeant? Gratia illius quæram hunc questionis titulum: an potentiæ animæ ab essentia animæ distinguuntur?

corrupted and being moved. “Power” understood in this last way implies being in a certain state or condition and belongs to the first species of Aristotelian quality.⁶⁸ Mair continues that Aristotle goes on to describe active power as a principle of change in virtue of which one thing changes another and a passive power as a principle of change in virtue of which one receives change from another.⁶⁹ The last definition, of power as a principle of transformation, is attributed to Aquinas who thought that the powers of the mind taken generally are accidents of the mind that are to be distinguished from the substance of mind. The powers of the mind are further divided between the organic powers such as the senses and the non-organic such as the intellect and will and memory.⁷⁰ This final definition of the term “power” (*potentia*) is taken as the starting point for Mair’s discussion of the nature of the relationship between the essence of mind and the powers of intellect and will.

REALISM ESCHEWED—THE MIND IS SIMPLE AND INDIVISIBLE

There is neither a real nor a formal distinction to be made between the mind and its powers nor is a distinction to be made between the mental powers themselves. The essence of mind is really its principal

⁶⁸ Aristotle. *Categories*, [8^b27].

⁶⁹ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 95^{rb}]. ...Aristoteles 5 [1019^a15-1020^a6] et 9 [1046^a9-15] *Metaphysicæ* distinguit potentiam quantum ad eius principia in potentiam activam et potentiam passivam et inhabilitatis impassibile, hoc est, in qualitativam dispositionem secundum quam subiectum potest resistere corruptivis et motivis. Iste tertius modus potentiæ ad primam speciem qualitatis pertinet. Postea describit potentiam activam et passivam dicens quod potentia activa est principium transmutandi alterum in quantum alterum. Et potentia passiva est principium transmutandi ab altero.

⁷⁰ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 95^{rb}-va]. Postea scito Beatus Thomas in Prima Parte q. 77 et 54 tenet generaliter quod potentia distinguitur ab anima et est accidens quarum quædam inhærent animæ tantum ut potentiæ non organicæ ut intellectus, voluntas et memoria sunt accidentia secundum eum. Organicæ, quales sunt sensitivæ, sunt accidentia et inhærent toti composito, hoc est, aggregato ex anima et determinata portione carnis.

powers, that is, the non-organic powers of intellect and of will.⁷¹ Mair rejects the realist position which maintains that the powers of intellect and will are natural capacities of the mind belonging to Aristotle's second species of quality, that is, of natural capacity and incapacity. This results in accidental and not essential or *per se* unity.⁷² The unity is accidental because while something *y* may have the capacity to be *x* it will not be *x* or acquire *x* unless that capacity is actualized; and it is not necessary for that capacity to be actualized in order for the subject to continue existing as *y*. Intellect and will, on this account, must be accidents that are really distinct from the substance of mind. Mair invokes in this context the theological principle that God by his absolute power can destroy every accident of an object while still preserving the substance in which the accident inheres. God is able to do this because the existence of a substance does not depend on its accidental properties. Substance and accident are metaphysically distinct; hence it is logically possible for God to destroy one while preserving the other. On the realist account it is possible then for God to preserve the substance of the mind while destroying the accidents of intellect and will. There is a very serious metaphysical consideration underlying this discussion and it is brought to the fore when Mair writes that according to the realist doctrine it is possible that God can make it such that the intellective soul having neither intellect nor will is still able to understand and to will.⁷³

⁷¹ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 95^{va}]. Secunda conclusio. Anima est sua potentia principalis loquendo de potentia non organica. Hoc est, anima realiter est suus intellectus et voluntas et memoria.

⁷² Aristotle. *Categories*, [9^a14-15].

⁷³ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 95^{va}]. Probatur. Da oppositum. Intellectus animæ est accidens ab essentia animæ distinctum et est accidens absolutum cum est de secunda specie qualitatis secundum eos. Modo Deus de potentia absoluta potest destruere omne accidens (potissimum absolutum) conservando substantiam eius cum substantia non dependeat ab accidente. Mirabile est quod[=si?] Deus non potest conservare substantiam destruendo accidens eius. Etsi hoc Deus potest dabitur anima intellectiva nec habens intellectum nec voluntatem et istis seclusis anima potest adhuc intelligere vel

Mair denies that the natural capacities of the minds are distinct from the substance of mind. It is quite clear that it is not possible to perform an act without having the capacity or potency to do so. There can be no act of understanding without having the potential to understand and the potential as the capacity to understand something is passive. If it is admitted that the mind can really be distinguished in terms of substance and accident then one must grant that God can either destroy the accident while preserving the substance or destroy the substance while preserving the accident. Moreover, as we have just seen, it is possible for God to preserve one accident while destroying another. Hence the realist doctrine must allow that it is possible for God to destroy the capacity to understand while preserving the act of understanding. This is nonsense because it is not possible for me to be engaged in the act of understanding Latin if God were by his absolute power to destroy my capacity to understand Latin. This is a hard doctrine that the realists would accept but it is precisely because of this implication of separability that neither the Nominalists nor the Scotists admit any real distinction between existence (*esse*) and essence (*essentia*) on the part of a thing.⁷⁴ The mind is a simple substance without accidents or divisions. It follows from the above rejection of the realist position that an intellect is a will (*intellectus est voluntas*).

velle. If the “quod” is not rejected in favour of “si” then the “non” in the phrase “...mirabile est quod Deus [non] potest conservare substantiam destruendo actus eius.” the “non” is certainly mis-placed. If not, we are forced either to conclude that Mair is simply contradicting himself from one line to the next or that the indicative mood of “esse” should read in the subjunctive in which case the “non” would be permissible but seems improbable. It is more probable that we should read “si” in which case the difficulty disappears.

⁷⁴ Mair. *In secundum* d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 95^{va}]. Nec nominalium unus, nec Scotistarum aliquis existimat discrimen aliquod inter esse et essentiam ex parte rei. Quælibet essentia est suum esse et e converso. Nec passio est accidens ut ipsi ponunt ut alibi videri habet apud me hæc maxima est utrobique admittenda: in quibuscunque rebus creatis et distinctis quarum una non est pars alterius Deus potest quamcumque illarum conservare reliqua corrupta sive sit accidens sive substantia. Et ita nominalium quilibet concedit.

THE SCOTIST CHALLENGE—THE FORMAL DISTINCTION REJECTED

“This mind is an intellect. And this mind is a will. Therefore a will is an intellect” and by means of an appeal to the principle of conversion Mair concludes that an intellect is a will.⁷⁵ It is important to note that the above syllogism was classed as a third figure expository syllogism, in respect of which there are two salient features. First, the central feature of the third figure is that the middle term occurs as subject in both the major and the minor premise, for instance, the term “this mind” in the above syllogism.⁷⁶ Second, an expository syllogism by definition is one that holds true in virtue of singular terms which in the above syllogism is revealed by the singularity of the demonstrative pronoun “this”.⁷⁷ It is important to note these features of the syllogism Mair offers as proof of the identity of intellect and will because it reveals the possibility of predicating the terms “intellect” and “will” of each other, for example, “This intellect is a will”. It is a predication that could not have been admitted by Scotus who thought that the distinction between the powers of intellect and will meant that they were formally

⁷⁵ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 95^vb]. Tertia conclusio. Intellectus est voluntas. Probatur. Hæc anima est intellectus. Et hæc anima est voluntas. Ergo voluntas est intellectus. Et convertens illius conversæ est tertia conclusio. Probatur maior. Aliquid est intellectus. Et non accidens ex secunda conclusione. [See fn. 71]. Nec est alia substantia ab anima. Qualibet alia seclusa anima potest intelligere. Ergo est intellectus. Sicut recte in libro *de Spiritu et Anima* dicitur quod anima est intellectus dum intelligit et voluntas dum vult. Secundo arguitur ad idem non est petenda pluralitas ubi paucitas sufficit. Sed omnia optime salvantur ponendo intellectum esse substantiam animæ. Nec possunt salvari res multiplicando distinctas. Igitur.

⁷⁶ John Mair. *Syllogismi in In Petri Hispani summulas*, (Lyons, 1505); [sig. y 4^{va}]. Horum autem terminorum alter vocatur medium, alter maior extremitas, alter vero minor extremitas. Medium terminus bis sumptus ante conclusionem. Maior extremitas est terminus sumptus in maiori propositione cum medio. Minor extremitas est terminus sumptus in minori propositione cum medio... Figura est ordinatio trium terminorum secundum debitam subiectionem et prædicationem... Tertia figura est quando medium subiicitur in utraque ut omnis homo est animal, omnis homo est substantia, ergo quædam substantia est animal unde versus.

⁷⁷ Mair. *Syllogismi*, [sig. π 1^{va}]. Notandum est primo quod syllogismus expositivus est syllogismus tenens virtute termini singularis.

distinct and hence could not be predicated of one another.⁷⁸ Mair is careful to focus on his fellow country-man's formal distinction in response to the allegation that the rejection of any real or formal distinction between the powers of mind is untenable because it follows from this that an intellect wills, or similarly, that a will understands.

John Duns Scotus, like Mair, rejects Aquinas' distinction between the powers of the intellect and will and between the powers and the essence of the mind.⁷⁹ They both thought that the intellect and will are so inextricably bound together that not even God by an act of absolute power could separate them without destroying the simple substance *qua* essence of mind. Unlike Mair, Scotus does not deny that there is some kind of real distinction between the intellect and will nor does he deny that the distinction has its basis in the intrinsic nature of mind. It is on this basis that Scotus posits formal distinction because while he does not want to say that the intellect and will are real or essential parts of the mind, by the same token he does not want to claim that the intellect and will cannot, in some way, be distinguished. He thinks that the terms "intellect" and "will" refer to different formalities of the mind as a principle of operation that are so intrinsically and inextricably linked together that one cannot exist without the other, but he does not hesitate

⁷⁸ It is possible that the attention Mair directs towards Duns Scotus is partially based on the following passage, of which I offer only a report. It is a passage in which Scotus rejects Henry of Ghent Quodl. 3, Quæst. 4 in *Reportata Parisiensis*, d. 16, q. 1, in *Opera Omnia Tomus 23*; [p. 77]. Ad aliud cum dicitur quod hæc erit vera, intellectus est voluntas, dico quod non, quia intellectus imponitur naturæ, ut sub hoc respectu, voluntas, ut sub illo vel illo conceptu. Vel potest dici quod quantumcumque sint eadem realiter in essentia animæ, tamen quidditative vel formaliter distinguuntur; et ista diversitas impedit prædicationem unius de alio. Si igitur an intellectivo et volitivo abstrahantur intellectus et voluntas, si est ibi aliqua distinctio formalis, unum non prædicatur de alio, sicut nec animalitas de humanitate, quamquam includantur in illo; sed ratione unitatis realis potentiarum in essentia animæ hæc erit vera: intellectivum est volitivum in causa, etsi abstrahantur intellectus et voluntas ab eo, quod est causa unitatis, neutrum de alio verificatur.

⁷⁹ See John Duns Scotus, *Reportata Parisiensia*, d. 16, q. 1; in *Opera Omnia Tomus 23*, [pp. 67-77].

to reject the possibility of predicating the powers of each other. This is unlike Mair who writes that the only distinction between the powers of the mind is a logical one. Mair admits that having denied that the existence of a formal distinction between the powers of the mind, he is committed to the following premises “This intellect understands. This intellect is a will.” but Mair denies that this forces him to the following conclusion: “Therefore, a will understands.”⁸⁰ Mair offers the following solution to the objection:

But the will does not understand by means of the will. The mind by means of the will understands but it does not understand by means of the will. The first part, [that the mind by means of the will understands], is obvious. The mind by means of this intellect understands. This intellect is the will. Therefore. [The mind by means of this will understands]. The second part, [that the mind understands by means of the will], says that the will is the principle of understanding which is false. I posit no such formal distinction. In every way the intellect is the will and there is no distinction except of reason and in connotation. They are not synonymous terms. “Intellect” indirectly (*in obliquo*) implies an act of understanding. “Will” does not connote this but the aptitude for an act of will. They are nevertheless convertible terms. Once the terms have been understood significatively nothing is stated about the intellect unless the same is said about the will⁸¹

⁸⁰ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 96^{vb}]. Contra tertiam conclusionem arguitur. Ex ea sequitur quod intellectus vult. Similiter hæc conclusio. Sequitur quod voluntas intelligit. Istæ conclusiones sunt omnem modum loquendi et quod sequatur patet sic. Hic intellectus intelligit. Hic intellectus est voluntas. Ergo voluntas intelligit. Expositorie in tertia figura. Alia conclusio patet. Hæc voluntas vult. Hæc voluntas est intellectus. Ergo intellectus vult. Consequentia tenet ut prius. Et premissæ sunt veræ secundum dicta: quia non pono distinctionem realem vel formalem more contreranei [i.e., Scoti] inter voluntatem et intellectum. Respondetur concedendo conclusiones illatas.

⁸¹ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 96^{vb}]. Sed voluntas non intelligit voluntate. Anima voluntate intelligit sed non intelligit voluntate. Prior pars patet. [i.e., Anima voluntate intelligit.] Anima hoc intellectu intelligit. Hic intellectus est voluntas. Igitur. [i.e., Anima hac voluntate intelligit.] Secunda pars [i.e., Anima intelligit voluntate.] dicit quod voluntas est principium

THE LOGIC OF TERMS — “INTELLECT” AND “WILL” ARE CONVERTIBLE
BUT NOT SYNONYMOUS TERMS.

Some definitions of the key terms will help shed light on the wealth of logical sophistication in the rejection, implied by Mair's position, that the will is a principle of understanding. The crucial distinction, between synonymous and convertible terms, is treated at length in David Cranston's detailed additions to Mair's logical work *Termini*. One category of terms is those terms that are said to be convertible:

Convertible terms are so related that it is not possible for one to be true of something with some mediating copula without the other likewise being true of the same thing with a similar copula unless one of them, and not the other, cannot be verified on account of being reflexive⁸² (*reflexionem*).⁸³

intelligendi. Quod est falsum. Ad illam distinctionem formalem nullam talem pono. Omni modo intellectus est voluntas nec est distinctio ulla nisi rationis et in connotatis. Et non sunt termini synonymi. Intellectus actum intelligendi in obliquo [viz., the genitive “intelligendi”] importat. Hoc non connotat voluntas sed aptitudinem ad actum volendi. Sunt tamen termini convertibiles. Nihil de intellectu enunciatum quin illud idem de voluntate enunciatum significative capitis vocabulis.

⁸² On the subject of reflexive notions see Broadie. *Notion and Object*, [pp. 28-29]. I offer two of Mair's definitions. First, Mair. *Posteriora* in *In Petri Hispani Summulas*, (Lyons, 1505); [sig. dd 2^{va}]. Notitia reflexa est notitia repræsentans directa rem quæ non est notitia significans, et tunc potest dici quod conceptus entis in ordine ad notitias est reflexa, sed in ordine ad Sortem et Platonem est directa. “A reflexive notion is a direct notion representing something which is not a signifying notion, and then it can be said that the concept of a being ordered to notions is reflexive, but ordered to Socrates and Plato it is direct.” Second. John Mair. *In tertium Sententiarum*, (Paris, 1519); [fol. 31^{rb}]. Notitia reflexa notitiæ Sortis est naturalis similitudo solius accidentis, et nullomodo naturalis similitudo Sortis, et cum est conceptus ultimus nullo modo Sortem repræsentabat. Numquam conceptus ultimus repræsentat aliquid nisi cuius est naturalis similitudo. “A reflexive notion of a notion of Socrates is a natural likeness of only an accident, and in no way a natural likeness of Socrates, when the concept is ultimate it in no way way represents Socrates. Never does an ultimate concept represent something unless it is a natural likeness of it.” Since reflexive notions are not natural likenesses of objects they cannot be convertible.

⁸³ John Mair. *Termini*, [sig. b 8^{vb}]. Termini convertibiles sunt termini sic se habentes quod non stat unum illorum pro aliqua re verificabilem esse mediante aliqua copula quin alter pro eadem re similiter acceptus mediante simili copula verificabilis sit nisi uni illorum repugnat verificari propter reflexionem et non alteri.

Of convertible terms only those that have the same ultimate signification can be said to be synonyms. Synonymy, thus, is a subdivision within convertibility and while it is true that all synonymous terms are convertible it is not the case that all convertible terms are synonymous. Cranston gives the most detailed account of synonymous terms in his *Terminorum*:

Of terms, some are synonymous, others non synonymous. Synonymous terms are terms signifying the same thing in an adequate way at least according to the signification in virtue of which they are synonymous terms. An example is concerning these terms: “man”, “man”. There are many differences in respect of synonymous terms. Some are outright synonymous as regards every signification of which nature are identical terms such as those two terms given. Other terms are synonymous in virtue of every essential signification, not according to accidental or grammatical signification, of this kind are the direct and the indirect, for example, “angel” and “angel’s”. Other terms are synonymous as regards ultimate signification, for example; “*lapis*” (stone) and “*petra*” (stone), “*gladius*” (sword) and “*ensis*” (sword). From these this corollary follows: these terms “*homo*” and “*risibile*” are not synonymous terms, that they are convertible terms is obvious; since they are universally verifiable of each other. From the above statements the following definition of non-synonymous terms follows. Hence a term non-synonymous with another is that which does not signify the same thing both adequately and in the same way as the other, for example, these terms: “angel” and “incorporeal”.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ David Cranston. *Tractatus terminorum*, [b 2^{vb}]. Termini synonymi sunt termini significantes idem adæquate modo saltem secundum significationem secundum quam sunt termini synonymi. Exemplum est de istis terminis terminis: “homo”, “homo”. Et isti se habent in multiplici differentia. Nam quidam sunt synonymi simpliciter quoad omnem significationem cuius naturæ sunt termini identici quemadmodum sunt illi duo termini dati. Alii termini sunt synonymi secundum omnem significationem essentialem non secundum significationem accidentalem seu grammaticalem cuiusmodi sunt rectus et obliquus ut: “angelus”, “angeli”. Alii sunt termini synonymi quoad significationem non ut sunt isti termini:

It is beyond a doubt that the definition of synonymy is different from the modern one in virtue of the inclusion of identical terms in the list of those terms that are to be classed as synonymous. There is good reason to think however that identical terms were a particular case. Cranston in his additions to Mair's *Termini* writes:

Of convertible terms some are convertible according to only one signification. Others according to two or three. Others according to every signification. An example of the first "Tullius", "Marcus" are converted with "homo", "risibile" according to ultimate signification. Also, there are two kinds of "according to ultimate signification". Some of these terms are synonymous according to one signification only, for example, terms signifying the same thing or terms signifying somehow in the same way and these, according to the Philosopher, are properly called synonymous terms and are to be distinguished from identical terms. Also, of convertible terms some are in no way synonymous, for example, "homo", "risibile". An example of the second, for example, "mucro" and "gladius" which are convertible as regards two significates that are also ultimate, e.g., a real sword and a painted sword.... An example of the last kind, such as "man", "man" which are convertible terms as regards every signification.⁸⁵

"lapis", "petra"; "gladius", "ensis". Ex his correlariæ sequitur istos terminos "homo", "risibile" non esse terminos synonymos. Quod sint termini convertibiles patet quia universaliter de se invicem verificantur.

- ⁸⁵ Mair. *Termini*, [sig. c 1^vb]. Terminorum convertibilium quidam secundum unam significationem tantum convertuntur. Quidam secundum duas vel tres. Quidam secundum omnem suam significationem convertuntur. Exemplum primorum: "Tullius Marcus" convertuntur secundum significationem ultimam "homo", "risibile". Etiam secundum significationem ultimam, et adhuc isti sunt duplices: quidam illorum sunt synonymi secundum unam significationem tantum, ut sunt termini idem vel aliquid eodem modo significantes, et isti proprie termini synonymi appellantur secundum Philosophum [*Categories*, 1^a6], et distinguuntur contra terminos identicos. Quidam vero nullomodo synonymi sunt ut "homo", "risibile". Exemplum secundorum ut "mucro", "gladius", convertibiles sunt quoad duo significata etiam ultimata, puta, in ordine ad gladium verum et ad gladium pictum... De ultimis exemplum ut "homo", "homo" sunt termini quoad sunt termini quoad omnem significationem convertibiles.

The verifiability of the identity of the terms “man”, “man” requires that each instance of the term “man” occurs within the same kind of language, i.e., mental, vocal, or written. Hence an utterance of the term “man” can never be identical with a written or a mental occurrence of the term “man”. Enough of this brief digression. The most relevant kinds of synonymous terms, for our purpose, are those that are synonymous according to ultimate signification, for example, *gladius* (“sword”) and *ensis* (“sword”) which are both convertible and synonymous because though different with respect to non-ultimate signification they have the same ultimate signification.

NATURALLY AND CONVENTIONALLY SIGNIFICANT TERMS

Before proceeding to an exposition of the distinction between non-ultimate and ultimate signification it will be helpful to introduce two concepts that are basic to any late-medieval discussion of meaning: signification and supposition. It was universally agreed by late-medieval terminist logicians that to signify is to represent something, or to represent in some way to the cognitive faculty.⁸⁶ It was common to divide terms into those that were naturally significant and those that were significant by convention, i.e., terms significant by voluntary imposition or at the pleasure (*ad placitum*) of the language user.

To signify naturally is to represent apart from any imposed meaning, according to a thing’s nature, not in the sense that

⁸⁶ Mair. *Termini*, [sig. a 8^{ra}]. Insuper adverte quod significare sic describitur: est potentiae cognitivae aliquid repraesentare. “Repraesentare” ponitur in loco generis non quia communior capiendo significare ut hic definitur, sed quia terminus notior quod sufficit in definitionibus quid nominis. Dicitur “aliquid” transcenderet ut includat aliqua et aliquid. Dicitur “potentiae cognitivae” ad excludendum potentias non cognitivas quemadmodum est potentia ignis quae potentiae apud Aristotelem vocantur irrationales et per potentiam nihil aliud intelligo quam intellectum sive fuerit nudus solus vel purus. Et dicitur “potentiae cognitivae” et non “intellectivae” ad significandum quod aliquid repraesentatur brutis quod sic declaratur: canis in aula a consuetudine vocatur “Sortes”, audita hac voce “Sortes” movetur et non nisi quia ei aliquid significatur per hanc vocem “Sortes”.

imposition is always excluded from natural signification as is obvious from the term “being”, but in this way, that granted that there had not been an imposition none the less it might signify that thing.... To signify “at pleasure” is to represent by imposition or by custom, for example, this term “man” signifying men.⁸⁷

Earlier in his *Termini* Mair wrote that a “mental term is a concept of the mind or a modification of the mind signifying naturally and it is sometimes called an act of understanding, an apprehensive notion of the thing, a vital transformation, an effigy, a likeness, a cognition.”⁸⁸ In contrast, spoken and written terms, are conventional signs that are imposed to represent a mental concept. Natural signs are prior to conventional ones: there must be an apprehensive notion in place before a sign can be imposed to represent the concept. Conventional signs, though they are imposed to represent natural signs, do not have the same meaning as natural signs. The difference between the meaning of natural and conventional signs originates in their different ontological status. Natural terms *qua* mental terms are cognitive acts; but conventional signs, either spoken terms or written, are not acts of understanding; rather, they are physical objects that are instituted in order to permit the communication of concepts. Mental terms once established cannot alter; but conventional signs, because they are arbitrarily imposed to refer to a concept can change their signification. The terms “*gladius*” and “*ensis*” are conventional signs imposed to

⁸⁷ Mair. *Termini*, [sig. a 8^{va}-v^b]. Significare naturaliter est ex natura rei quacumque impositione remota repræsentare non ad hunc sensum quod a significatione naturali semper impositio excludatur ut patet de termino “ens”, sed sic scilicet quod dato quod non esset impositio non minus illud significaret... Significare ad placitum est ex impositione vel consuetudine repræsentare ut iste terminus “homo” in significando homines.

⁸⁸ Mair. *Termini*, [sig. a 2^{va}]. Terminus mentalis est conceptus animæ vel passio naturaliter significans et vocatur nonnumquam actus intelligendi, notitia apprehensiva rei, vitalis immutatio, effigies, simulachrum, cognitio.

signify the same mental concept, i.e., a sword; but they could equally have been imposed to signify something else, for example, a shield.

MATERIAL AND PERSONAL SUPPOSITION — DISTINGUISHING NON-ULTIMATE AND ULTIMATE TERMS

The second most important doctrine in the late-medieval discussions of meaning and truth is supposition. Supposition is a restricted kind of signification and a term supposits only when it is placed in the context of a proposition. Mair begins his discussion of supposition in *De Suppositionibus* the following way:

supposition is a term in a proposition that is verifiable of a demonstrative pronoun or a noun signifying the thing which it signifies by means of a copula of the proposition in which the term is posited or by means of a similar [copula] in which the terms are similarly accepted as regards their logical properties.... It is said “verifiable of a demonstrative pronoun” because when it is doubted whether a term supposits we may see the object which [the term] signifies by positing the pronoun that stands for the [noun-]subject (*a parte subiecti*) and if the proposition in which the given term is predicated by means of the pronoun is true [then] such a term supposits.⁸⁹

Having explained the general character of supposition Mair explains that a distinction should be made between terms that have material supposition and terms that have personal supposition. This is most helpfully introduced in terms of the distinction between ultimate and non-ultimate supposition. He writes:

⁸⁹ Mair. *Parva Logicalia: Tractatus de suppositionibus* in *In Petri Hispani summulas*, [sig. dd 8^{ra}-rb]. Suppositio est terminus in propositione existens verificabilis de pronomine demonstrante vel nomine significante rem quam significat mediante copula propositionis in qua ponitur terminus vel mediante una simili in qua termini similiter accipiuntur quantum ad proprietates logicales. Dicitur “verificabilis de pronomine demonstrante” quia quando dubitatur de aliquo termino an supponat videamus rem quam significat ponendo pronomen a parte subiecti et si propositio sit vera in qua prædicatur terminus datus de pronomine talis terminus supponit.

Personal supposition is the supposition of a term for its ultimate significate ordered (*in ordine*) to an ultimate concept.... Material supposition is the supposition of a term for its non-ultimate significate according to a non-ultimate concept.⁹⁰

In his *Termini* Mair states that “a concept is said to be non-ultimate on account of the fact that it is a natural likeness of a distinct term.”⁹¹ Thus, the written terms *gladius* and *ensis* are different with respect to non-ultimate signification because they are spelled differently. The non-ultimate concept of *gladius* is the apprehension of “*gladius*” *qua* written term with a given material composition; “*ensis*” gives rise to a different non-ultimate concept, that is, “*ensis*”. They have different material supposition. In short, in the context of a proposition when a term is understood according to its material supposition then the predicate refers to the subject as it occurs in that proposition without any reference to what the subject really means, that is, the subject taken according to its ultimate signification.⁹² In a certain way it is possible to claim that

⁹⁰ Mair. *Tractatus de suppositionibus*, [sig. ee 4^{ra}]. Suppositio personalis est suppositio termini pro suo significato ultimo in ordine ad conceptum ultimum. Hoc clare dicitur. Duo requiruntur ad hoc quod terminus supponat personaliter. Primum quod pro suo significato ultimo accipiat. Secundum est quod terminus secundum talem significationem secundum quam capitur subordinetur conceptui ultimo... Suppositio materialis est suppositio termini pro suo significato non ultimo secundum conceptum non ultimum. Ponere suppositionem simplicem in via nominalium est solum multiplicare verba. Omnis suppositio est personalis vel materialis. Si libeat loqui cum loquentibus suppositio simplex est quando terminus qui non est conceptus ultimus supponit pro conceptu qui non ultimate significat.

⁹¹ Mair. *Termini*, [sig. a 7^{vb}]. Conceptus dicitur non ultimus eo quod est naturalis similitudo termini distincti.

⁹² Walter Burleigh (b. 1275—d. 1345?) offers an interesting and different account regarding the material supposition of syncategorematic terms. He writes that in a proposition such as “Omnis est syncategorema syncategorematicè acceptum”, quod hæc est vera secundum quod “omnis” tenetur materialiter et per modum categorematis; supponit tamen pro seipso syncategorematicè accepto, et ideo est vera, quamvis prædicatum non insit ei quod supponit prout hic supponit. Sufficit enim ad veritatem huius affirmativæ, quod prædicatum insit ei pro quo supponit; et hoc est verum, quia certum est quod “omnis” in aliqua propositione est syncategorema syncategorematicè acceptum. Briefly, the suggestion is that in the above proposition the term “omnis” supposits for equiform occurrences of the word in other propositions e.g. “Omnis homo est rationalis”. “Omnis” in the original proposition supposits materially and can function categorically.

material supposition treats the subject as non-significative because, in the context of that proposition, it is not signifying that which it customarily signifies. In contrast, one can say that *gladius* and *ensis* have the same ultimate signification, that is, the same personal supposition, because after each term has been apprehended *qua* term the mind progresses until it reaches the concept of that which the term was imposed to signify which in each case is the same. Mair explains in the following way:

A concept is called ultimate since it is regularly a later concept which we have of a term. The term itself causes two concepts. For example, having grasped the term “king” it generates efficiently in the hearer at first a concept of this utterance “king” and afterwards a concept of the significate of “king”. And granted that both are produced instantaneously, nevertheless, the non-ultimate concept is, at any rate, prior in nature, and is presupposed in time or in nature by the ultimate concept provided that the ultimate concept is caused by the term: but not vice versa, when the term naturally represents a non-ultimate concept and conventionally an ultimate concept. Also a concept is called ultimate since there the understanding ultimately rests and a term is called non-ultimate for the opposite reason. For example, when the utterance *anthropos* is grasped by a Latin speaker the mind of the hearer does not rest there but progresses to the concept of the signified thing as the signification is explored.⁹³

However, on Burleigh’s account, in order to determine the truth of the proposition it is necessary to consider its equiformity with its occurrence in other propositions and hence according to both its personal or ultimate signification and according to its proper syncategorematic function. Walter Burleigh. *De Puritate Artis Logicæ Tractatus Longior, with a Revised edition of the Tractatus Brevior*, ed. Philotheus Boehner, (New York, 1955); [p. 6]. See also A. Broadie. *Introduction to Medieval Logic*, 2nd Edition, (Oxford, 1993); [p. 31].

⁹³ Mair. *Termini*, [sig. a 8^{ra}]. Conceptus vocatur ultimus quia regulariter est posterior conceptus quem de termino habemus. Terminus ipse duos causat conceptus ut capto isto termino “rex” generat efficienter in audiente primo conceptum huius vocis “rex”: postea conceptum rei significatæ. Et licet uterque instantanee producat conceptus tamen non ultimus est prior saltem natura et

Briefly, a term supposits materially when it signifies itself *qua* term and, a term supposits personally when signifying that which it was imposed to signify.

THE LOGIC OF TERMS APPLIED TO THE TERMS "MIND", "INTELLECT",
"WILL".

It is clear that when Mair writes that the terms "mind", "intellect" and "will" understood significatively, that is, according to personal supposition, are convertible but not synonymous terms he wants to draw to our attention the fact that while it is possible to substitute one term for another in a categorical proposition *salva veritate* it is not the case that these terms are synonymous. "Mind", "intellect", and "will" do not signify the same thing in precisely the same way. Having grasped each term in its material significance one is led to a different ultimate concept. For example, "intellect" leads one to think of the mind engaged in an act of understanding and "will" prompts one to consider the mind engaged in act of choosing. Thus, the terms are imposed to signify different modes of act of the simple substance called "mind". When the terms have been understood significatively there is nothing that can be said about the intellect without the same being said about the will. They are not synonymous because "will" and "intellect" refer to mind exercising different powers. They are not interchangeable in all respects; but they are convertible, because what is said about one power can be said, and indeed must be said, of the other since "intellect" and "will" refer to the "mind" which is really and truly one and the same

præsuppositus tempore vel natura conceptu ultimato dummodo conceptus ultimus causetur a termino: sed non econverso cum terminus conceptum non ultimum naturaliter repræsentat ultimum vero ad placitum. Etiam dicitur conceptus ultimus quia ibi intellectus ultimo quiescit et non ultimus opposito modo dicitur: ut prolata hac voce "anthropos" coram Latino apprehensa voce animus auditoris non quiescit sed in conceptum rei significatæ cum discursu significationis progreditur.

thing as its powers. The terms “mind”, “intellect” and “will” are verifiable of one another.

It is obvious that Mair’s rejection of Scotus’ formal distinction is at least partially based on the allegation that the denial of the existence of a formal distinction in respect of the essence of mind and its powers implies that the terms “mind”, “intellect”, and “will” are synonymous terms. Once again, synonymous terms are terms that signify the same thing in an adequate way or signify in the same way. Unlike the contention of Scotus from the following premises: “This intellect understands. This intellect is a will.” Mair does not think that he is forced to conclude: “Therefore, a will understands.” because this implies that the will is a principle of understanding which is denied.

THE NOMINALIST SOLUTION

The only distinction between the mind and its powers is one of reason and in the connotation of terms. It was stated earlier that Mair thought “intellect” (*intellectus*) in an oblique case connotes an act of understanding (*actus intelligendi*) and similarly that “will” (*voluntas*) in an oblique case connotes an act of willing (*actus volendi*). He is careful to draw our attention to the fact that “properly speaking it is not objects that are posited in a category, rather, it is terms by reason of their mode of signifying an object in either an absolute or connotative manner that are placed in a specific category.”⁹⁴ It is obvious by now that “mind” properly belongs to the category of substance and while it is plausible to speak of the mind as having parts we should not forget that this is a linguistic imposition which does not necessarily portray the true

⁹⁴ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 96rb-va]. Tertio potentiae animae sunt in prædicamento qualitatis. Ergo sunt accidentia... Ad Tertium dicitur proprie res non ponuntur in prædicamento sed vocabula ratione modorum significandi absolute vel connotative. Non inconvenit aliquid poni in omnibus prædicamentis tamquam rem significatam.

metaphysics of mind. The division of categorematic terms into absolute and connotative terms is of great importance and is given a prominent position in the discussion of terms by Mair and his colleagues. It is this division which serves as the basis for the distinction between a real definition (*definitio quid rei*) and a nominal definition (*definitio quid nominis*). Briefly stated a real definition is one which expresses the nature of an object without implying anything extrinsic to the object and explains both what the object is (*quæ est*) and what kind of object it is (*qualis est res*). In the opposite way a nominal definition explains what is signified by the term without touching on the essential nature of the object being defined.⁹⁵

“INTELLECT” AND “WILL” — ABSOLUTE AND CONNOTATIVE TERMS

Cranston in his additions to Mair's *Termini* begins his discussion of absolute and connotative terms with this definition:

an absolute term is one which neither implies, nor might imply, anything beyond the material significate; nor [implies, nor might imply] the material significate as existing in some way (*aliquaqualiter*) granted that [the term] had a material significate according to which it is absolute. In the position here laid down I understand by “material significate” the significate for which the term is fitted by nature to supposit without ampliation, etc. but if not so fitted by nature [to supposit] except by ampliation then the material significate is known according to the term placed first in its definition.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ John Mair. *Prædicabilia* in *In Petri Hyspani summulas*, (Lyons, 1505); [sig. r 4^{vb}]. Duplex est definitio: quædam quid rei alia quid nominis. Et vocatur quid rei quia explicat quæ res est et qualis est res explicata per definitum. Alia est quid nominis et est definitio explicans quid per nomen significatur non curando quæ res est et qualis sit quæ definitur et hic capitur nominis ut tantum valet sicut termini.

⁹⁶ Mair. *Termini*, [sig. c 5^{va}]. Terminus absolutus est qui nihil ultra materiale significatum nec aliquaqualiter illud importat nec importaret esto quod significatum materiale haberet secundum quod absolutus est. Per “materiale significatum” in proposito intelligo significatum pro quo terminus natus est supponere non

Absolute terms refer to a determinate group of individuals, that is, a term that signifies absolutely can be predicated of any individual without further qualification and does not signify one thing directly and another thing indirectly or obliquely. The material significate of a term was contrasted with the formal significate of a term. The formal significate identifies a common or universal nature and the material significate is that to which the common nature belongs. Though late-medieval nominalist logicians, like Mair and Cranston, shunned the use of an expression such as “common nature” or “universal nature”; they made the same distinction by differentiating between whiteness and those things that are white.⁹⁷ The material significate of an absolute term is that for which the term is naturally fitted to supposit; it is the significate of the term considered according to its ultimate signification. In the case of absolute terms the formal significate determines a unique range of material significates. This is clarified in the following way: the term “*homo*” is an absolute term which formally signifies all things that have a human nature and neither signifies anything beyond the group of material significates nor signifies the material significates as existing in some way.

In contrast “a connotative term implies something beyond the material significate or denotes the material significate as existing in some way.”⁹⁸ The indirect or the implied significate, was also known as

ampliatius etc., vel si non sit natus nisi per ampliationem significatum materiale cognoscitur penes terminum positum primo loco suæ definitionis. See also David Cranston. *Tractatus Terminorum*, [sig. b 2^{va}]. Terminus absolutus est ille qui ultra significatum non denotat ipsum materiale aliquantulum se habere ut sunt isti termini “homo”, “animal”, “asinus”.

⁹⁷ E. J. Ashworth. *Language and Logic in the Post-Medieval Period*, (Dordrecht, 1974); [p. 92].

⁹⁸ Mair. *Termini*, [sig. c 6^{va}]. Terminus connotativus est terminus qui ultra materiale significatum aliquid importat vel ipsum materiale significatum aliquantulum se habere denotat. Prima pars probatur propter tales terminos “calidum”, “album”; secunda, propter istos “pedale” et “currens”.

the connoted. The first part of the definition is obvious from the following example: one cannot apprehend the term “hot” without calling to mind something in which heat inheres. Hence while “hot” materially signifies hot things it formally connotes the quality of heat. In the same way, the term “white” materially signifies something that is “white” and formally signifies the quality of white. It was obvious to Mair, perhaps less obvious to us, that “white” signifies white things directly and indirectly signifies whiteness. The formal significate of a connotative term does not necessarily determine a unique group of individuals; as a result, a connotative term can be predicated over a range of different material significates that share a common feature.⁹⁹ This may be helpfully illustrated as follows: the connotative term “red” may be applicable to flowers, trees and birds. The second part of this definition is demonstrated by terms such as “walking” and “running” which denote both that something exists and that it exists in some way. For instance, the term “walking” not only materially signifies all things of which it is true to say “This is walking” but also implies that what is being referred exists in some way.

The importance of the division of absolute and connotative terms for our discussion is highlighted in Hector Boece’s extremely interesting and detailed exposition of the division:

An absolute term is a term signifying something or some things according to a quidditative description (*sub ratione quidditativa*) and in its stricter description no oblique term is posited. A connotative term is a term signifying something or some things not according to a quidditative description and in its stricter description an oblique term is posited and sometimes several oblique terms by which its formal significate is expressed. Moreover, the formal

⁹⁹ E. J. Ashworth. *Language and Logic in the Post-Medieval Period*, [p. 92].

significate is that by which a term is said to be absolute or connotative. Also the formal significate is that by which a term is posited in a category because in respect of absolute terms [the formal significate] is not distinct from the material significate. Sometimes, in the case of connotative terms [the formal significate] is distinct [from the material significate], for example, either by implying accidental forms or by implying an essential part. Sometimes, [the formal significate] is not distinct from the material significate, for example, in the case of these [terms] which imply an accidental mode because of the formal significate. In respect of connotative terms, [the formal significate] is called, the connoted. But, the material significate is that which the term signifies in the nominative case for which it is accepted when it supposits in a proposition. Hence “according to a quidditative description” is that according to which something is considered a thing, as the being it is, not having a relation to the parts out of which it is composed whether to an accident or to any essential or accidental mode of existing. “Not according to a quidditative description” is that description according to which a thing is considered by the intellect to have a part or to have parts, to have an accident or to have accidents an accidental or essential mode of existing or inasmuch as it lacks some accident or some mode of existing. For example, the description by which something is considered a “man” in so far as he is a “man” without having a relation to anything else is absolute and quidditative. And a term signifying a man according to that description is an absolute [term] but the description according to which a “man” is considered such as “white” or “black”, “sitting” or “standing”, “poor” or “rich”, is non—quidditative.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Boece. *Explicatio*, [fol. 2^{va}-v^b]. Terminus absolutus est terminus significans aliquid vel aliqua sub ratione quidditativa et in eius definitione magis propria nullus ponitur obliquus. Terminus connotativus est terminus significans aliquid vel aliqua non sub ratione quidditativa et in definitione eius magis propria ponitur obliquus et nonnunquam plures obliqui quibus exprimitur formale eius significatum. Est autem formale significatum id a quo terminus dicitur absolutus vel connotativus a quo etiam ponitur terminus in prædicamento quod in terminis absolutis non distinguitur a materiali significato. In connotativis aliquando

Boece, as was commonplace, distinguished between absolute and connotative terms on the basis of the material and formal significate. He states that whether a given term should be classed as absolute or connotative depends on the nature of the distinction between the material and formal significate of the term. A quidditative description is a description which considers a being *qua* being (*ens in quantum ens*). In the case of absolute terms such as “man”, the description according to which it is possible truly to predicate the term “man” of “all things sharing human nature” without reference to any particular determination or circumstance is the quidditative description. It is according to this description that man is considered *qua* man; for example, in all cases where it is possible to point to something and say: “This is a man” when what is meant is that the object is represented by the formal significate, that is, human nature. On Boece’s account of absolute terms it is not possible to distinguish the material significate from the formal significate. The material significate of the term is all things that share human nature and the formal significate of the term “*homo*” is the mode of existence of the material significate, which in this case is *homo qua homo*. The account of the distinctions to be drawn with regard to the formal and material significates in respect of connotative terms is a good deal more complicated. Boece explains that in respect of connotative

distinguitur ut in importantibus formas accidentales vel partem essentialem: aliquando non distinguitur a materiali ut in his qui important accidentalem modum de formali et vocatur in terminis connotativis connotatum. Est autem materiale significatum id quod terminus significat in recto pro quo accipitur in propositione quando supponit. Unde ratio quidditativa est secundum quam consideratur res ut ens est non habendo respectum ad partes ex quibus componitur vel ad accidens vel ad aliquem modum se habendi essentialem vel accidentalem. Ratio non quidditativa est ratio secundum quam consideratur res ab intellectu prout habet partem vel partes accidens vel accidentia modum accidentalem vel essentialem se habendi vel prout caruerit accidente aliquo vel aliquo modo se habendi. Ut ratio qua consideratur homo in quantum est homo non habendo respectum ad aliud est absoluta et quidditativa. Et terminus significans hominem sub ea ratione est absolutus sed ratio qua consideratur homo prout est “albus” vel “niger”, “sedens” vel “stans”, aut “dives” est non quidditativa.

terms some terms are intrinsically and other terms extrinsically connotative. He elaborates on the distinction in the following way:

an intrinsically connotative term is a term connoting adequately an essential part of the thing for which it is apt by nature to supposit or adequately connoting that the thing exists in an essential mode. For example, “rational” formally connotes a rational soul as part of a human being. “Of stone” supposits for the thing while connoting that the thing is substantially and essentially a stone.... “Adequately” because though this term “part” implies an essential part of a thing since it signifies all parts formally, it nevertheless does not connote adequately an essential part; and the same sort of thing should be said concerning these terms “divided”, “having parts” and the like. An extrinsically connotative term is a term implying an accident as the formal significate by means of a term adjacent [i.e., not separated by a copula] or not to that for which it [the term] is fitted by nature to supposit; or [an extrinsically connotative term is a term implying] some accidental mode of existing. For example, “white”, “black”, “sitting”, “standing”, “poor”, “rich” so on.¹⁰¹

The formal significate of an intrinsically connotative term adequately captures the essential mode of existing of an object but unlike an absolute term the material and formal significate can be distinguished. For example, the term “rational” implies “rational soul” which may be formally and essentially predicated of the term “human

¹⁰¹ Boece. *Explicatio*, [fol. 3^{ra}]. Terminus connotativus intrinsece est terminus connotans adæquate partem essentialem rei pro qua natus est supponere vel ipsam rem essentiali modo se haberi: ut “rationale” connotat de formali animam rationalem prout est pars hominis: “lapideum” supponit pro re connotando eam substantialiter et essentialiter esse lapidem. Pari modo dicendum est de his terminis “materiatum” “ferreum” “angelicum” et similibus. Dicitur hic “adæquate” quia hic terminus “pars” licet importat partem essentialem rei quia omnes partes significat de formali tamen non connotat adæquate partem essentialem. Et similiter dicendum est de his terminis “partitum”, “habens partes” et similibus. Terminus connotativus extrinsece est terminus importans de formali significato accidens per modum adiacentis vel non adiacentis illi pro quo natus est supponere vel aliquomodo accidentali se habere: ut “album”, “nigrum”, “sedens”, “stans”, “pauper”, “dives”, et huiusmodi.

being". In the opposite way, an extrinsically connotative term does not formally refer to an essential mode of existing but refers only to some accidental mode of existence. Consider the extrinsically connotative term "sitting" (*sedens*) in the proposition: "*homo est sedens*". An accidental mode of existence is implied in respect of the absolute term "homo". The formal significate "sitting" is not essential to the nature of man. Unlike the intrinsically connotative term "rational", which connotes a material significate distinct from the formal significate; the extrinsically connotative term connotes as its material significate something sitting which can be applied to an indeterminate group of things that share the attribute "sitting".

This is an interesting account but it will be helpful to present Mair's account of the same division as given in the *Praedicabilia*:

...To connote intrinsically is to connote distinctly an essential part of the thing for which it supposits if it supposits implying nothing extraneous, for example, "rational" supposits for "man" while connoting a rational soul which is an essential part of the thing for which it supposits. "If it supposits" because granted that no man existed this term "rational" will none the less connote intrinsically. "Extraneous", is said advisedly, because if the term "a" were to supposit for "man" while connoting that which has a rational soul fitted to be in motion or to understand it would not connote wholly intrinsically but simply extrinsically.... To connote extrinsically is to connote something extrinsic in relation to the thing for which [the term] supposits if it supposits or to connote that something exists in a way or not exists in a way which is not essential to the thing for which the term is accepted. Briefly, as often as a term connotes and not distinctly an essential part of a thing for which it is accepted either it signifies the same thing in an oblique case which it signifies in the nominative case, or, if not, it connotes extrinsically....

Briefly, to connote extrinsically is to connote something which is not an essential part of the object for which it is accepted.¹⁰²

It is beyond doubt, according to Mair and Boece, that it is completely improper to think that to construe the mind as having parts is anything more than an imposition of reason. This is affirmed in the following corollary given by Boece: “Every term signifying a substance according to a description by which it contains parts or contains an accident or has an accidental or essential mode of existing is connotative.”¹⁰³ Moreover the terms “intellect” and “will”, on all accounts, are extrinsically connotative. The description by which the mind is said to have parts in no way implies that these parts are either essential to the substance of mind or integral to the substance of mind. There is absolutely no distinction between the mind and its powers or between the powers themselves. The terms “intellect” and “will” name the same simple and indivisible substance: “This mind is an intellect. And this mind is a will. Therefore an intellect is a will.” Yet we do speak about the mind as the ability to perform different kinds of acts. Even our definitions betray us: the definition of “intellect” as a power of understanding excludes the definition of “will” as a power of willing.

¹⁰² Mair. *Prædicabilia*, [sig. q 6^{rb}-va]. ...connotare intrinsece est connotare partem essentialem distincte rei pro qua supponit si supponat nihil extranei implicando ut “rationale” supponit pro homine connotando animam rationalem quæ est pars essentialis rei pro qua supponit. Et dicitur “si supponat” quia dato quod omnis homo non esset iste terminus “rationale” non minus intrinsece connotabit. Et dicitur notanter “extranei” quia si ly “a” supponeret pro homine connotando quod habeat animam rationalem aptam moveri vel intelligere non connotaret omnino intrinsece sed simpliciter extrinsece... Connotare extrinsece est connotare aliquod extrinsecum respectu rei pro qua supponit si supponat, aut connotare aliquammodo esse vel non esse qualiter non est essentialis illius rei pro qua accipitur. Et breviter quotienscumque terminus connotat et non distincte partem essentialem rei pro qua accipitur sive significet idem in obliquo quod significet in recto sive non tunc extrinsece connotat... Sed connotare extrinsece breviter est connotare aliquid quod non est pars essentialis pro qua accipitur.

¹⁰³ Boece. *Explicatio*, [fol. 2^{vb}-3^{ra}]. Tertium corollarium. Omnis terminus significans substantiam sub ratione qua habet partes vel accidens vel accidentalem vel essentialem modum se habendi est connotativus.

But this is far from being incompatible with claiming that the powers of the mind cannot really be distinguished. When we use the terms we simply signify what is really the same cognitive power. In a very definite way the terms “intellect” and “will” signify the same substance. But “intellect” connotes the ability of the mind to be engaged in a naturally caused cognitive act, that is, an act of understanding and “will” connotes the ability of the mind to engage in a freely caused cognitive act, that is, an act of will; but both terms signify the same simple and indivisible cognitive power. In other words, while the terms “intellect” and “will” refer to different modes of operation and to that extent can be said to have different formal significates they share the same material significate, which is named by the term “mind”. All of the above distinctions between “intellect” and “will” are purely nominal. “Intellect” and “will” do not refer to things that are distinct in the thing as such (*a parte rei*). They are distinct only as “beings” of reason (*entia rationis*), they have a purely mental existence as “mental entities”. “Intellect” and “will” are only partially significative of the mind’s essence. But “mind” lacks partial connotation, that is, one cannot think of the mind without conceiving of mind as an intellective, volitive, simple substance. “Intellect” and “will” are nominally defined; as a result all the terms which occur in their definition are connotative. They render explicit and clarify that which is only indistinctly signified by that which is being defined (*definitum*).¹⁰⁴ It is knowledge by description as opposed to knowledge by direct cognitive experience.

¹⁰⁴ Mair. *Prædicabilia*, [sig. r 5^{va}]. Definitio quid nominis solum est terminorum connotativorum et proprie terminorum non potentium supponere mediante hoc verbo “potest”: et definitum et definitio in talibus subordinantur eidem conceptui. Et vocatur ideo definitio quia explicite et distincte declarat quid per definitum indistincte significatur.

THE MIND HAS PARTS BY EXTRINSIC DENOMINATION

There is a basic friction as regards the way we experience and understand the substance we call “mind” and the true metaphysical nature of mind. This tension between the way we know things and the way things are is re-emphasized when Mair writes that the mind is said to have parts not because there is some real composite to which the terms “intellect” and “will” refer, but only by way of analogy. While we may describe the mind as a complex structure having parts; these descriptive parts do not refer to an intrinsic or essential structure of the mind. The mind is really a simple substance and is said truly to have parts only “subjectively by extrinsic and accidental denomination” (*subiective denominatione extrinseca et accidentali*).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 97^{ra}]. Secundo arguitur tertio *De Anima*. Intellectus et voluntas dicuntur partes animæ sed pars non identificatur cum suo toto. Igitur. Respondetur distinguendo quod sunt partes animæ vel partes essentielles vel integrales. Et sic negatur. Tales enim partes non habet anima sicut dicitur in *de Spiritu et Anima* capitulo octavo: Tota animæ essentia in suis potentiis consistit nec per partes dividitur cum sit simplex substantia et individua. Et si aliquando partes habere dicatur ratione potius similitudinis quam veritate compositionis intelligendum est. Simplex substantia est anima. Vel quod sunt partes similitudinarie et quodammodo subiective denominatione extrinseca et accidentali. Et sic concedo. Aliqui termini in sua connotatione important unum officium animæ et aliqui aliud officium de quibus anima indirecte tanquam minus connotativum [sed generalius officium habens] denominative prædicatur. Propterea res importatæ cum tota connotatione quodammodo dicuntur partes animæ. Intellectus potentiam connotat ad intelligendum. Ecce unum officium animæ. Voluntas habet aliam connotationem in qua aliud animæ officium connotatur. Memoria significat animam potentem memorari. Et sic de aliis. Terminus “anima” non habet talem connotationem partialem. Et sic quia isti termini important unam partem significationis animæ dicuntur partes animæ importare. Some phrases in this passage are quite opaque in an effort to clarify the difficulties I first consulted a later edition of the *In secundum Sententiarum*, (Paris, 1528) to which the phrase “sed generalius officium habens” is added to the text. Despite this emendation the text remains obscure. One possible reading for the most troubling passage which begins: *Aliqui termini in sua...* and ends with *...prædicatur* might be: “Some terms in their connotation imply one function of the mind and other terms imply another function by which terms the mind is indirectly and denominatively predicated as if [the term mind] is less connotative but has a more general function.” The implication may be while “mind” signifies a cognitive power it is not as explicit as the terms “intellect” and “will” which connote specific capacities of the of mind and hence the term “mind” is in a sense less connotative but has a more diverse range of cognitive functions. I consulted the 1510 edition of *In secundum* at fol. 35^{ra-rb}. The text is very unlike later editions but it provides the following to support my interpretation.

The topic of extrinsic denomination was standardly invoked when discussing the relationship of an act of assent or dissent to the truth-value of a proposition (*propositio*). While there was no hesitation among any of the members of Mair's circle in assigning a truth-value to a judgment it was agreed that a judgment could not be true in the same way that a proposition could be true. An act of assent, unlike a proposition which has an identifiable structure, is simple and without complexity. George Lokert writes that "judicative notion is said to be true or false by extrinsic denomination since it corresponds to a true or false proposition"¹⁰⁶ The relationship is between act and object: the act of assenting is said to be true because its object is a true proposition which is the appropriate bearer of a truth-value. The truth of a judgment is vicarious.

In a similar way we can only say that the mind has parts by extrinsic denomination. In the same way that it is inappropriate to attribute complexity to an act of assent, it is improper to say that the mind is really something complex. The complexity of the mind is derivative from the various propositions used to describe it. The mind is only indirectly and denominatively predicated of the terms "intellect" and "will". It is only in this sense that it is appropriate to say that the powers of the mind are accidental to the substance of the mind which is metaphysically simple. This is parallel to the claim that the terms

Quod potentia dicuntur ebullire ab anima et eius partes quia aliquid importatur per potentiam quod non evacuat totum ambitum animæ. Intellectus connotat actum intelligendi et supponit pro essentia animæ, voluntas pro eadem connominando aliam operationem scilicet velle. Sic de memoria dicatur. Terminus anima hæc non connotat sed omnia illa indeterminate significat quare cum alii termini partiales operationes animæ important partes eius dicuntur vel dicuntur par[te]s in modo ad suum totum. Quando commentator dicit potentia ebulliunt ab essentia animæ capite potentias pro actibus illicitis potentialium.

¹⁰⁶ George Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. e 8^{va}]. Notitia iudicativa dicitur vera vel falsa denominatione extrinseca quia respondet propositioni veræ vel falsæ.

“intellect” and “will” are extrinsically connotative terms. The terms “intellect” and “will” do not refer to things that are intrinsically different from one another. Unlike the terms “intellect” and “will” the term “mind” does not have partial connotation. One cannot conceive of the mind without at the same time conceiving of the intellect and the will. The idea that the mind is not one and the same with the powers of intellect and the will is simply incomprehensible as Mair understands the nature of mind. Thus “intellect” and “will” are said to be parts of the mind only because they imply one part of the true signification of the term “mind” as a dynamic cognitive power. They are distinct *qua* functions of the mind but they are not distinct *qua* the metaphysical nature of the mind. It is not completely inappropriate to describe the mind as having parts but it must be recognized that such a description does not portray the true nature of mind. The description is representative of the mind only by way of analogy and is not evidence of a true metaphysical structure of the mind.

SENSITIVE AND APPETITIVE POWERS ARE REALLY DISTINCT

While there is no real distinction to be made between the mind and the powers of intellect and will the same is not true for the sensitive and the appetitive powers. Mair writes:

The organic powers of the mind, the sensitive as well as the appetitive powers, are really distinct from the mind. This is obvious in regard to a sense or in regard a power, the verdict is the same in regard to all these powers. Sense is not intellect (I am speaking about the senses in a human being). Therefore. The assumption is obvious. Any sensation whatsoever is extended. No intellection is extended. Therefore, they have different subjects of which one is divisible and extended and the other unextended. If sensation is not extended then this conclusion follows: the

mind can have two intuitive notions of distinct kinds at one and the same time in respect of the same object. This is inconsistent.¹⁰⁷

The distinction between the intellect and the sensitive and appetitive powers is both obvious and necessary.

We now see by what convention intellect, will, and memory are really to be identified with the mind and, as a result, with each other. Whatsoever things are identical with a third are identical with each other. However, the senses are to be distinguished from the mind as a whole is to be distinguished from its parts and the senses are really distinct. This is obvious. Though they have the same mind inasmuch as it is a principal part nevertheless there are different parts and dispositions required for each of the senses. They are nevertheless essentially homogeneous as a group and accidentally heterogeneous and of a different description. And though sense (*sensus*) is entitatively more perfect than the intellect since it contains the intellect and something else as well, nevertheless the intellect is more perfect than sense. Whatsoever sense is able to sense the intellect is able to understand that same thing. The sense is only able to sense the sensible. The intellect understands every sensible and together with it indivisibles which are in no way the objects of sense.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 95^vb]. Quarta conclusio. Potentiæ animæ organicæ tam sensitivæ quam appetitivæ realiter distinguuntur ab anima. Patet de sensu vel de una potentia; idem est iudicium in omnibus. Sensus non est intellectus et loquor de sensu hominis. Igitur. Assumptum patet. Sensatio quælibet est extensa. Intellectio nulla est extensa. Ergo habent varia subiecta quorum unum est divisibile et extensum et aliud inextensum. Si sensatio sit non extensa sequitur hæc conclusio quod anima potest habere duas notitias intuitivas specie distinctas simul et semel de eodem obiecto quod est inconveniens.

¹⁰⁸ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 97^{ra}-rb]. Nunc videmus quonam pacto intellectus, voluntas et memoria realiter cum anima identificantur et per consequens identificantur inter se. Quicumque identificantur uni tertio identificantur inter se. Sensus tamen ab anima distinguuntur tamquam totum a parte et sensus realiter distinguuntur. Patet. Licet habeant eandem animam tamquam partem principalem, tamen sunt aliæ partes et dispositiones requisitæ ad singulos sensus; sunt tamen homogeneæ essentialiter inter se heterogeneæ et alterius rationis accidentaliter. Et licet sensus entitative sit perfectior intellectu quia intellectum continet et cum hoc aliquid aliud tamen intellectus est perfectior quam sensus. Quicquid sensus sentire potest id idem intellectus intelligere

The senses, or sensitive powers, were commonly taken to be a precondition for the appetitive powers which are nothing other than inclinations towards an object based on the apprehension of that object by means of the senses. Mair continues:

Moreover, there are as many appetitive powers as there are cognitive powers and they are identical with them. This is obvious. The intellect is really the will. Therefore, in the same way the power of sight is its appetitive power, and the power of hearing is its appetitive power. Moreover it is obvious that though there are some powers that are not the mind, nevertheless the principal powers are to be identified with it. The first part is obvious: Anything whatsoever is able to be a power, for example, heat. Anything you like effectively moves the mind to produce a created notion which it has or is able to have concerning it. The second part [is obvious] from what has been said. And though the [principal] powers are identical with it; the acts of these powers are distinct in kind as much from the mind as from the powers in-themselves and among themselves. Though the will is the intellect, volition is nevertheless distinguished from intellection even in relation to the same object. And in the familiar way of speaking we say that the will and the intellect are different powers of the mind on account of diverse functions and on account of the diversity of their acts. In what way the powers are distinguished by means of acts is obvious from the preceding question where it said that fire ascends, dries and heats and nevertheless there is one small fire acting by means of diverse instruments. Though powers are distinguished by means of acts nevertheless there are not as many powers as there are acts. Otherwise, it would be necessary to multiply powers endlessly which is against all manner of speaking.¹⁰⁹

potest. Sensus solum sensibile sentire potest. Omne tale intellectus intelligit et cum hoc impartibilia quæ nullo modo sunt objecta sensus.

¹⁰⁹ Mair. *In secundum*, d. 16, q. 1; [fol. 97^{rb}]. Insuper. Tot sunt potentiae appetitivae quot cognitivae et cum eis identificatae. Patet. Intellectus realiter est voluntas. Ergo eodem modo potentia visiva est sua appetitiva et auditiva sua appetitiva. Amplius patet. Licet aliquae sunt potentiae quæ non sunt anima,

The opening lines of this passage are, to say the least, cryptic. The difficulty originates in the highly compressed nature of the above argument. It is an argument with which the contemporaries of Mair would have been familiar.¹¹⁰ In the first instance the sentence “there are as many appetitive powers as there are cognitive powers and they are identical with them” is simply claiming that sensitive cognition and sensitive appetite are identical. The identity of the cognitive and appetitive powers is asserted in virtue of an analogy with respect to the identity that Mair has argued for between the intellect and the will. More importantly it is consonant with his doctrine of the unity of forms which, as we have seen, argued that there is only one substantial form that is for the human composite. Hence it is necessary to preserve this identity of the sensitive and appetitive powers. Paradigmatically, sight

tamen potentiæ principales animæ cum ea identificantur. Prior pars patet. Quicquid aliquid potest esse potentia: ut calore. Res quælibet movet effective ad productionem creatæ notiæ quæ habetur de ea vel haberi potest. Secunda pars ex dictis. Et licet potentiæ animæ cum ea identificentur: actus illarum potentialium distinguuntur specie tam ab anima quam ab potentiis ipsis et inter se. Licet voluntas sit intellectus: volitio tamen specie distinguitur ab intellectione: etiam respectu eiusdem obiecti. Et in famato modo loquendi dicimus voluntatem et intellectum esse varias animæ potentias propter diversa officia et actuum diversitatem. Quomodo potentiæ distinguuntur per actus patet ex questione precedenti (viz., d. 15, q. 2): ubi dictum est ignis ascendit, desiccatur, et calefacit. Et tamen est unus parvus ignis mediantibus diversis instrumentis. Licet potentiæ per actus distinguuntur non sunt tot potentiæ quot actus, alioquin, oporteret in abyssum multiplicare potentias contra omnem modum loquendi. Cf., Manderston. *Bipartitum*, [sig. k 4^{rb}]. Sed ulterius quæreret aliquis an sicut est una et eadem anima in eodem homine et non plures distinctæ realiter, an etiam sit solum una potentia animæ et non plures distinctæ realiter in eodem homine. Dico pro nunc breviter usque ad libros *De Anima* quod pure nominalisando in homine est solum una potentia animæ principalis et essentialis quæ nihil aliud est quam ipsamet anima diversa tamen nomina propter suas diversas operationes quas nata est exercere sed sunt multæ potentiæ animæ instrumentales in eodem homine realiter distinctæ, puta, tot quot sunt sensus et præviæ dispositiones prærequisitæ ad operationem animæ producendam.

¹¹⁰ While it is always a risk to identify the provenance of an argument it is almost certainly the case that Mair was following the lead of William of Ockham in his discussion of whether a diversity of operations was sufficient to infer a diversity of powers. It is therein that I have garnered several insights into the above argument. See William of Ockham [Guillelmi de Ockham]. *Quæstiones in Librum Secundum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, eds. Gedeon Gál and Rega Wood; (Bonaventure, 1981): q. 20; [pp. 425 line 4 to 447 line 19].

and hearing were said to exist subjectively in their respective appetites. This is also true for the other external senses. While it is the case that diverse external senses are responsible for a range of sensitive appetites it is not the case that one must admit diversity on the part of a thing in virtue of a diversity in the kinds of acts. The diverse nature of mental acts is not due to a diversity of powers intrinsic to the substance of mind. The powers of mind are differentiated on account of the diverse nature of their objects. While the intellect is the will it is not the case that intellection is the same as volition. The intellectual grasping of an object is different from freely choosing that same object. The distinction that is made in respect of the powers of intellect and will is due to their different kinds of acts.

In order to clarify this it will be useful to provide definitions of the terms “intellect” and “will”. The intellect is the power to apprehend, to remember, to abstract and to judge *species* that are transmitted to it and give rise to a notion. Qualities of the objects conveyed to the senses by way of species in the medium (*species in medio*) naturally result in an act of understanding (*actus intelligendi*). This implies that there is a correspondence between the mental term and the external object to which it refers. *Intellectus est voluntas*-The intellect is the will. The will is the power to act freely in the light of notions. *Nihil volitum nisi præcognitum*-“nothing willed unless already known” was a popular phrase which Mair sometimes employed. No act is willed unless the end or purpose of the act is known. It is singularly important in the medieval conception of free causation that one must have knowledge of the ends of the action if that action is to be described as freely caused. William Manderston writes that without any fore-knowledge of its objects the will is said to be blind in its operations and its counsel is the intellect. In this way the will neither flees nor pursues any object unless it is revealed

by the intellect as to be pursued or to be avoided. Hence, that the intellect reveals to the will that something is to be sought or is to be avoided is for the intellect to have judged or at least understood that it should be pursued or should be avoided.¹¹¹ It is simply not possible to develop an adequate theory of action without providing a complete theory of knowledge. The question of the relationship of the powers of intellect and will to each other and their connection with to the information provided by the senses is intimately linked with a consideration of the relationship of theoretical and practical knowledge the discussion of which, as was stated above, will be undertaken from a distinctly theological perspective—“How is the pilgrim able to acquire faith?”.

¹¹¹ Manderston. *Bipartitum*, [sig. a 1^{vb}-a 2^{ra}]. Conveniunt et differunt appetitus sensitivus et rationalis. Conveniunt quomodo quemadmodum appetitus sensitivus non potest elicere actum suum sine obiecti præcognitione neque etiam voluntas ideo voluntas dicitur cæca in suis operationibus et eius consul est intellectus quomodo nullum prosequitur aut refugit obiectum nisi ostensum ab intellectu prosequendum aut fugiendum. Unde intellectum ostendere voluntati aliquid esse prosequendum aut fugiendum est iudicare illud esse prosequendum aut fugiendum vel saltem apprehendere.

CHAPTER 3

NOTIONS

INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter a detailed account of the metaphysical nature of the pilgrim was undertaken in order to provide a suitable understanding of the powers that enable the pilgrim to acquire the virtue of faith. This starting point was justified on the grounds that the *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* as a consideration of the concept of acquired religious faith was ostensibly an exploration of the metaphysical and epistemological framework of the pilgrim. The pilgrim as mind informing body (*anima informans corpus*), specifically, as a human composite whose principle of operation is the intellective soul (*anima intellectiva*), is best understood as a set of powers, or capacities for performing intellective, volitive, sensitive and appetitive acts. These acts express different ways in which the pilgrim is able to relate to different objects. The elaborate discussion of the nature of the mind was necessary in order to introduce the set of intellective powers in virtue of which the pilgrim is said to be capable of performing a variety of cognitive acts. In this chapter I wish to introduce and explore the late-medieval epistemological concept *notitia* a term which was employed to refer to numerous kinds of cognitive acts. First, there will be a general discussion of the term *notitia*. Second, an account will be given of the cognitive process according to the theory which posits the

existence of species in the medium. In the final section of this chapter I will examine the distinction between sensory and intellectual notions.

NOTIONS *SIMPLICITER*

The term *notitia* is a technical medieval term which is often translated as “cognition” but this does not adequately convey the particularly late-medieval pre-occupation with clarifying the precise meaning of the term *notitia* and its function within the epistemological framework of the pilgrim. I will therefore translate the term *notitia* as “notion” in order to preserve the technical manner in which the term was employed in late-medieval philosophy. It is arguably the single most important concept of late-medieval epistemology and George Lokert, David Cranston, Gilbert Crab, and Gervaise Waim are among those who devoted entire and significant treatises to its elucidation. John Mair writes that “an actual notion is a quality inhering in the subject by which the subject formally knows.”¹¹² Lokert gives the following definition “a notion is a quality immediately representing something or in some way to a cognitive power”.¹¹³ Gilbert Crab defines a notion as follows:

a notion is a quality inhering in a cognitive power, vitally changing the power and representing something or some things to that cognitive power. First, it is posited in the genus of quality and I say “inhering in a cognitive power” in order to exclude other qualities which cannot inhere in a cognitive power such as material qualities. Hence, if an actual notion was in a subject other than in a cognitive power it would cease to be a notion.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 6^{rb}]. [Notitia] actualis est qualitas subiecto inhærens per quam ipsum formaliter cognoscit.

¹¹³ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. a 2^{ra}]. Notitia est qualitas potentiæ cognitivæ aliquid vel aliquialiter formaliter repræsentans.

¹¹⁴ Gilbert Crab. *Tractatus notitiarum magistri Gilberti crab*, (Paris, ca., 1503); [sig. a 2^{ra}]. Unde notitia est qualitas potentiæ cognitivæ inhærens vitaliter immutativa potentiæ aliquid vel aliqua eidem repræsentans. Et ponitur primo qualitas loco generis et dico inhærens potentiæ cognitivæ ad excludendas alias

It was universally accepted that in virtue of the absolute power of God a notion could be posited in a material object, for example, in a stone. However, it is explicitly rejected that a quality inhering in the stone is a notion. Material qualities are not notions.¹¹⁵ Mair makes it clear that while a notion is essentially and intrinsically a quality the converse, that a quality is essentially and intrinsically a notion is not true.¹¹⁶ Analogously, if God according to his absolute power were to suspend all the activity of the intellect without nevertheless destroying the quality inhering in the intellect, then that quality which was previously a notion will no longer be a notion.¹¹⁷ It was unanimous, the

qualitates quæ potentiæ cognitivæ minime inhærent sicut sunt qualitates materiales. Unde si notitia actualis esset in alio subiecto quam in potentia cognitiva desinere[t] esse notitia.

¹¹⁵ Crab. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. a 2^{ra}-rb]. Crab significantly amends his definition when he grants that some notions are material and divisible, sc., the notions of animals; others are immaterial and indivisible, sc., the notions of human beings. This addition is necessary because of the medieval distinction between the material intellect of animals and the immaterial intellect of human beings.

¹¹⁶ John Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 8^{ra}-rb]. Nam primo ponatur extra subiectum in uno loco et in alio loco tunc sic: hæc notitia in anima est notitia, hæc notitia in anima est qualitas in lapide; ergo qualitas in lapide est notitia. Secundo hæc notitia essentialiter et intrinsece est qualitas; ergo qualitas essentialiter et intrinsece est notitia. Consequentia tenet per conversionem per accidens... Ad aliud argumentum dicitur admittendo quod illa qualitas lapidi inhæreat et concedo quod qualitas in lapide est notitia, sed non est notitia in lapide. Ad tertium dico non esse bonam conversionem... Ex his liquet falsitas huius: Hæc qualitas essentialiter et intrinsece est notitia de potentia Dei absoluta, de potentia enim Dei ordinata et naturaliter loquendo hæc qualitas est essentialiter et intrinsece notitia. Hector Boece defines accidental conversion as “the conversion of two categorical propositions with the same terms though in reverse order, with the same quality but different quantity, and one a conclusion of the other in a formally valid consequence for example “Every man is an animal. Therefore some animal is a man”, where the quality is not changed but the quantity is.” Boece. *Explicatio*, [sig. c 3^{ra}]. Conversio per accidens est duarum propositionum categoricarum utroque termino participantium ordine converso manente eadem qualitate sed mutata quantitate unius ad alteram formalis consequentia ut: Omnis homo est animal ergo aliquid animal est homo, ubi non mutatur qualitas sed quantitas. See A. Broadie. *The Circle of John Mair*, [p. 231].

¹¹⁷ Crab. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. a 2^{rb}]. ...si Deus omnem activitatem ipsius intellectus suspenderet et remanente tamen illa qualitate quæ prius erat notitia non amplius erit notitia et sic non magis implicat ipsa existente in intellectu ipsam desinere esse notitiam quam si esset in aliquo subiecto non vitaliter immutativo.

cooperation of a cognitive power was a necessary condition for the production of a notion.

The most intriguing claim is that a notion is responsible for “vitally changing the power” (*vitaliter immutativa potentiae*). Crab writes that this can be understood in two ways. First, formally which is only true of actual notions. Second, effectively which is true of dispositions (*habitus*) and species. Hence while it is common to divide notions into the actual and the dispositional, only the former are truly and properly notions. He writes: “...dispositions though they are subjectively in a cognitive power are nevertheless not notions since they do not vitally change the cognitive power”. He continues: “a dispositional notion is not a notion and thus it remains a division of the analogous into its analogates”.¹¹⁸ Similarly, John Mair thought that a dispositional notion could be defined correspondingly in relation to the definition of an actual notion.¹¹⁹ George Lokert claims that not all qualities inhering in a cognitive power are notions since the key characteristic of notions is the ability to vitally and formally change a cognitive power.¹²⁰ In fact, the cognitive act *qua* notion is itself the modification. Lokert therefore claims that acts of will, dispositions, species and passions are not notions. The inclusion of acts of will among those which do not vitally

¹¹⁸ Crab. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. a 2^{ra}-rb]. Dico signanter vitaliter immutativa potentiae ad excludendos habitus quæ licet sunt in potentia cognitiva subiective non tamen sunt notitiæ cum non vitaliter immutant. Unde aliquid dupliciter dicitur vitaliter immutare; formaliter, et sic sola notitia actualis vitaliter mutat. Alio modo effective et sic habitus et species immutant et licet notitia dividatur in actualem et habitualement habitualement tamen notitia non est notitia et sic remanet divisio analogi in sua analogata.

¹¹⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 6^{rb}-va]. Notitia scinditur in actualem et habitualement. Actualis est qualitas subiecto inhærens per quam ipsum formaliter cognoscit. Dicitur subiecto et non intellectui propter notitias sensitivas hominis et brutorum... Habitualement potest proportionabiliter definiri.

¹²⁰ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. a 2^{vb}]. Ad primum dubium [viz., utrum quælibet qualitas inhærens potentiae cognitivæ sit notitia.] respondetur negative. Instantia est de actibus voluntatis secundum communioem opinionem similiter de habitibus, speciebus, et passionibus de quibus in processu videbitur.

and formally change a cognitive power is at first glance suspect since Lokert in the same vein as John Mair claimed that the power of intellect and the power of will *qua* appetitive powers are really one and the same power. Lokert is explicit on this matter: “volitions and nolitions vitally change an appetitive power in the same way that cognitions vitally change a cognitive power though any cognitive power is an appetitive power.”¹²¹ Lokert explains that this claim is in agreement with Aristotle who claims, that in living things, sense agrees with appetite, because those things appertain to pleasure and pain. The act of pursuing something pleasurable or the act of avoiding something painful is not itself a cognition. If this were the case then it would be superfluous to posit cognition as a pre-requisite for an appetitive act. Notions *qua* cognitions must precede all other intellectual acts.

THE ASSIMILATION OF KNOWLEDGE—SPECIES IN THE MEDIUM

It has long stood as a challenge, to those who wish to provide a comprehensive theory of knowledge, to explain how we perceive objects at a distance. This challenge was a part of the larger problem of giving an adequate account of how action at a distance was possible. Medieval philosophers were continuing an ancient tradition in their speculations concerning the issue of whether or not our knowledge of the external world was mediated by species in the medium (*species in medio*). In keeping with the etymological root of the word species, i.e., *speculum*, species were generally understood to be mirror images or likenesses (*similitudines*) of their objects. According to those who postulated the

¹²¹ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. a 2^{vb}]. Volitiones et nolitiones immediate vitaliter immutant potentiam appetitivam sicut cognitiones potentiam cognitivam licet quælibet potentia cognitiva sit appetitiva ut videtur velle Philosophus secundo *De Anima* [414^b1-6] dicens omnibus habentibus sensum convenit appetitus quia omnibus talibus insunt delectatio et tristitia actus tamen prosequitivus vel fugitivus alicuius non dicitur cognitio illius alias videtur superfluere cognitio prærequisita ad talem actum appetitivum producendum.

existence of species in the medium as part of the cognitive process, for example, John Duns Scotus and Walter Chatton, it was the species of the objects that caused objects to be perceived. It was thought that species radiated from their objects through the intervening distance between the object and the perceiver. It was also postulated that in the first instance it was the sensible species (*species sensibilis*) of an object that radiated to the perceiver and activated the appropriate sense receptor. However, the existence of the sensible species of an object was insufficient to explain the possibility of intellectual knowledge. After all, the human intellect was said to be immaterial; hence, it was also necessary to posit the existence of an intelligible species (*species intelligibilis*) in order to account for intellectual knowledge of objects. It is William of Ockham, who in the history of medieval philosophy, is associated with one of the most extensive and radical critiques of epistemology; and his lectures on the *Sentences of Peter Lombard* are said to have “articulated a new theory of knowledge”.¹²² Ockham thought that he had eliminated the need for both intelligible and sensible species in an account of the cognitive process. He was convinced that, in all instances, it was superfluous to posit the existence of species in the cognitive process since it was possible to explain how, even without them, objects are perceived and are known. In the place of sensible species he postulated impressed qualities (*qualitates impressæ*). He thought that the impressed qualities were sufficient to explain the various stages of the cognitive process. The debate between the followers of John Duns Scotus who had argued in favour of the existence of species in the medium and thinkers such as Hugh of Novocastro who were

¹²² Katherine H. Tachau. *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham: Optics, Epistemology and the Foundations of Semantics 1250–1345*, (Netherlands, 1988); [p. 113].

sympathetic to the enterprise of William of Ockham was still a lively one at the time that Mair and the members of his circle were writing. The paradigm case used to defend or reject the existence of species in the medium was the seeing of colour; and since with minor adjustments what can be said of colour can be said of the other sensory receptors, it is here that we begin our discussion in the context of determining the ontological status of species.

Mair singles out two opponents of the existence of species in the cognitive process, to whom he directs his argument in favour of their existence. The names of Durand de St. Pourçain (*Durandus de Sancto Portiano*) and William of Ockham are given in the margin of the text, presumably by the editors. Opposed to the existence of species, Durand de St. Pourçain¹²³ and William of Ockham thought that if species existed then they were of a very particular nature. They suggested two possibilities. The first was that the species of the object were of the same nature as the object they represented. The second was that the species were altogether different in kind from the object they represented. However, if they were of the same kind, it can be argued that “no formally contrary and opposed individuals” (*nulla individua formaliter contraria et repugantia*) are able to co-exist in the same subject.¹²⁴ Yet, in relation to the same part of the medium it would be true to say that white and black, which according to Ockham are

¹²³ Durandus de Saint Pourçain. *Domini Durandi a Sancto Portiano in Sententias theologicas Petri Lombardi Commentarium libri quattuor*, (Lyons, 1560); [fols. 118^{va}-119^{va}; n.b. fols. 118^{vb}-119^{ra}].

¹²⁴ John Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 34^{vb}]. Improbant opinionem [viz., against the existence of *species visibiles in medio*] secundum duo doctores [*in marg.*, Durandus, Ockham] quorum alter [sc., Ockham] sic argumentatur. Aut illæ species sunt eiusdem rationis cum obiecto, aut alterius. Si eiusdem rationis, tunc sic, nulla individua formaliter contraria et repugantia possunt se compati in eodem subiecto, sed respectu eiusdem partis medii potest albedo et nigredo æqualiter approximari. Et per consequens in nulla parte recipiuntur species albedinis et nigredinis.

“formally opposed”, are equally proximate. This is to say that the white and black patches of colour occupy the same spatial location in the intervening space between the object and the perceiver which is impossible. As a result, it follows that the species of whiteness and blackness are received in no part of the medium. Moreover, on the same assumption, i.e., that an object and its species are of the same kind, the opponents to the existence of species argue that it also follows that “the species of a colour is no more a cause of seeing than is the colour itself, since they are of the same nature and species”.¹²⁵

The opponents continue their attack on species on the grounds that “that which immediately causes the seeing is that which is immediately seen” and granted that, on the account of many, species are of the same nature as the object, then it follows that it is the species that is immediately perceived and not the object. For example, if the species of whiteness are of the same nature as the whiteness of the object, and they immediately cause the act of seeing then it is the species that are immediately seen and not the object. This however is manifestly false.¹²⁶ In this context Ockham mentions that it is vain to posit more than is necessary. In his mind the intellect and the thing seen were sufficient to explain the cognitive process without postulating the existence of species since the existence of species is neither known from experience nor suggested by self-evident truths.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 34^{vb}]. Item si sic. Species coloris non esset plus ratio videndi quam color cum sint eiusdem rationis et eiusdem speciei per te.

¹²⁶ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 34^{vb}]. Item quando sunt aliqua eiusdem rationis, illud quod immediatius causat visionem immediatius videtur; ergo si species albedinis sint eiusdem rationis cum albedine et immediatius causant actum videndi per te, ergo species immediatius videntur. Quod est manifeste falsum.

¹²⁷ The details of Ockham’s arguments against the existence of species in the medium are contained in William of Ockham [Guillelmi de Ockham]. *Quæstiones in Librum Tertium Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, eds. Francis E. Kelley and Gerard Etzkorn. (Bonaventure, 1982); [pp 43-97; n.b. p. 43 line 1 to p. 64 line 16]. Katherine H. Tachau. *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham* offers the

However, it can be argued, that if the species were of a different nature than their objects then they would belong to the genus of quality and it is obvious by means of induction that this could not be the case since no species is posited in the genus of quality.¹²⁸ Mair replies that the term signifying such species is to be found in the third Aristotelian kind of quality, namely, affective qualities and affections. Mair is referring to those qualities whose origin in affection makes them “hard to change” and “permanent”. Though it¹⁵ is possible to give a variety of descriptions to account for the fact that a wall is white, all such descriptions aim at clarifying what it is about the nature of the wall that enables one to say truly that it is white. Granted that species belong to the third kind of quality they are, according to Mair, of a different nature than say, colour itself.¹²⁹ That “species produced by objects are different in nature than their objects” is affirmed by Lokert who explains that there is “nothing absurd in a cause producing an effect of a different nature.”¹³⁰ Lokert thought this was obvious from our experience of many different agents. One illustration of this point is the ability of the mind to perform acts of intellect and acts of will, another is the ability of intuitive notions to cooperate in the production of cognitive dispositions which are different in kind than their cause. In the light of such claims Mair and the members of his circle were able to assert that while “species are the means and the cause of seeing they themselves are not

most authoritative discussion of various aspects of the epistemology of William of Ockham in its historical context.

¹²⁸ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 34^{vb}]. Si sint alterius rationis tunc essent in genere qualitatis et patet inductive quod non cum in nulla specie eius ponantur.

¹²⁹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 34^{vb}]. Ad istud dicitur [See fn. 128] (sicut dicendum est) terminus talis species significans ponitur in tertia specie qualitatis et illæ species sunt alterius rationis a colore. See Aristotle. *Categories*, [9^a29-10^b10].

¹³⁰ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. c 5^{rb}]. De speciebus productis ab obiecto conceditur illas esse alterius rationis ab obiecto, nec inconvenit aliquam producere effectum alterius rationis hoc patet de multis agentibus.

able to be seen".¹³¹ It follows from what has been said that the distinction between the species of the object and the object in-itself is destroyed. The cognitive power is no longer able to differentiate between the species and the species of the object.¹³² Consequently, the ability of the cognitive power to have direct knowledge of its objects is threatened since the cognitive power would not be able to determine whether what was being experienced was the species of the object or the object *tout court*.

Mair reports several arguments advanced by, but not particular to, Ockham who denied the existence of species on the grounds that the existence of species did not explain a variety of sense-experiences. The first objection he reports states that in the case of the sense of touch no species is posited, rather, one posits the presence of heat or some similar quality. Similarly, the light caused by a light is of the same species as the light. Therefore, the colour that is caused by colour is of the same species as it.¹³³ Thus, the redness caused by a red object is the same as the red particular to the object. There are no reasonable grounds to posit the existence of something of a different kind, viz., species in the medium, in order to account for the cognitive process. The truth of this conclusion rests on the fact that the experiences of touch and of seeing light are analogous to that of seeing colour. It is obvious that in the case of light and colour, since they both rely on what is seen, the analogy holds. The analogy between the sense of touch and the seeing of colour

¹³¹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 34^{vb}]. Et licet sint medium et ratio videndi, videri non possunt.

¹³² Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. c 5^{rb}]. Nec oportet quod potentia possit discernere inter obiectum et talem speciem postquam species non sunt perceptibiles sensu.

¹³³ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 34^{vb}]. Sed contra hoc argues. In sensu tactus non est ponenda aliqua species, sed calor vel alia similis qualitas. Similiter lumen causatum a luce est eiusdem speciei cum luce. Ergo quod causatur a colore est eiusdem speciei cum eo.

is certainly suspect. Mair responds that “this argument by analogy hobbles on a fourth foot (*claudicat quarto pede*) . In the absence of an odoriferous, or a warm body, there is a smell, or there is warmth; but in the absence of coloured body there is no whiteness. Indeed, the assumption is denied.”¹³⁴ It is obvious by appeal to one’s personal experience that the scent of a rose lingers in a room for some time after the rose has been removed. A similar case can be made concerning the warmth of human contact. However, if the white sheet of paper that I am now writing on is either destroyed or removed from my presence, I no longer see its whiteness; no whiteness endures.

Moreover, Ockham further argues the case against species in the medium “by proving that something which is of the same nature as the object is caused in the medium.”¹³⁵ This runs counter to the claim put forward by Mair and his contemporaries that species belong to a different category of quality than their objects. Ockham advances his argument by appealing to the experience of a light beam (*radius*) passing through a red or green window. His argument is reported as follows:

The light beam passing through the window causes a true colour on the opposite wall by means of the colour in the window as if a partial mediating cause, and that colour is of the same species as the colour in the glass since, otherwise, between that colour and the colour of the window there would not be as much agreement as there is.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 34^v^b-35^{ra}]. Respondetur. [See fn. 133] Argumentum a simili frequenter claudicat quarto pede. In absentia corporis odoriferi vel calidi percipitur odor vel calor, non autem albedo in absentia colorati. Etiam assumptum negatur.

¹³⁵ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Secundo arguit probando quod aliquid eiusdem rationis cum obiecto causatur in medio per experientiam de radio transeunte per vitrum rubeum vel viride.

¹³⁶ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Radius enim transiens per vitrum causat verum colorem in pariete opposito mediante colore in vitro tamquam mediante causa partiali et ille color est eiusdem speciei cum colore in vitro quia aliter inter colorem illum et colorem vitri non esset tanta convenientia sicut est.

The claim which immediately strikes the reader is that the light passing through a red or green window causes a “true colour” on the opposite wall. This is immediately denied by Mair because the question that is raised by such a claim is: What is the subject of this “true colour”? It is not the colour on the wall since the light hitting the wall has been modified as it passes through the window. Mair, therefore states that the colour of the light as it passes through the window, and the colour as it appears on the wall are, in fact, opposed to each other.¹³⁷ However, it might be argued that the “true colour” is caused in the air in the intervening distance between the window and the wall.¹³⁸ Mair’s response is that on that account several white beams of light travelling through the same medium would cause several whitenesses. Thus, air could become white like snow.¹³⁹ It is possible, according to Mair, that Ockham would accept such consequence. However, Mair rejects this consequence because “it is counter to experience”. He amplifies this by claiming that having accepted this position it follows that there would be the most intense whiteness in the air over the island of Crete.¹⁴⁰ The force of the rejection is as follows: if one grants that there is a “true colour” caused in the air then one must grant that it is possible for an infinite number of whitenesses to travel through the same medium. Hence, light radiating from something white would produce not one whiteness but an infinite number of whitenesses in such a way that air

¹³⁷ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Respondetur negando quod causetur vera rubedo quia quæritur de subiecto illius, non potest dici quod sit in pariete opposito. Stat quod illi colores sibi repugnent.

¹³⁸ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Sed arguens dicit quod causatur in ære.

¹³⁹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Sed contra hoc arguitur. Tunc plura alba causarent per idem medium plures albedines et sic ær potest tantum albefieri sicut nix.

¹⁴⁰ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Prima solutio [See fn. 138] non valet quia est contra experientiam. Tunc in insula Cretæ esset intensissima albedo in ære.

would be rendered opaque. This is clearly false since there is no experience of air being rendered opaque by colour, true or otherwise.

Secondly, Ockham might claim that the “air determines definite degrees (*certos gradus*) which it is able to sustain and not more”.¹⁴¹ The response Mair gives to this second contention of Ockham is more complicated. Mair begins his argument by explaining that, according to the more probable opinion, since accidents such as whiteness inhere in matter, and the matter of snow and the matter of air are the same in kind, then it follows that the matter of air is able to support as many degrees of whiteness as the matter of snow.¹⁴² This follows, according to Mair, because if it is accepted that the whole composite of matter and form is able to support an infinite number of individual whitenesses from the beginning, then, in the same way that redness is present in the generation of a rainbow, it ought to be granted that redness is present in the medium. However, according to Mair, we are wrong (*fallimur*) when we judge that there is no redness in the medium.¹⁴³ However the difficulty still remains to explain how the same medium can support and radiate different visible qualities. It was mentioned above that Ockham thought that if there are species in the medium then there will be moments when it is necessary for properties of objects that are “formally contrary and opposed” qualities to inhere in the same part of the medium as they radiate from the object to the cognitive power. Since whiteness

¹⁴¹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Ad hoc [See fn. 140] dicit arguens hoc non inconvenire vel forte ær determinat certos gradus quos potest suscipere et non plures.

¹⁴² Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Secunda [See fn. 141] etiam non valet. Albedo et huiusmodi accidentia inhærent materiæ ut probabilius tenet sententia et materia æris est eiusdem speciei cum materia nivis; ergo potest tot gradus suscipere quot nix.

¹⁴³ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Item si totum compositum esset primo susceptivum albedinis; si duo individua potest suscipere et infinita, quantum est ex parte eius et potissimum quando illa accidentia non sunt corruptiva formæ substantialis. Fateor quod putamus esse rubedinem in medio sicut in generatione iridis, sed nulla est, sed ibi fallimur iudicando.

and blackness are incompatible forms, how could the whiteness and blackness of an object radiate by means of the same medium? He thought that they could not. Either postulating that the medium supported the different colours at different times, or granting that the species radiated at the same intensity from their objects still does not show how the doctrine of the existence of species in the medium can do the job that is required of it. First, the forms are simply incompatible and the same medium could not support such an occurrence. Second, because the forms are of equal intensity, they cancel each other out. As a result, Ockham would argue, the whole doctrine of species in the medium must be abandoned. Mair, a proponent of the existence of species in the medium, counters that it does not follow that forms of equal intensity cancel each other since there will be redness and some other colour after the beam of light has passed through the red window.¹⁴⁴ There is a mixture of colour that radiates through the window. Perhaps, under an intense light there will be scarlet red while under a dim light there will be more of a red ochre. It is even plausible that the light passing through the window is already coloured, perhaps a pale shade of green. In such a case the light passes through the window and mixes with the redness of the window, and thus might be tinged with a slight hint of greenness. It still might be objected, “a quibble” (*proterviendo*) according to Mair, that there will be nothing other than redness.¹⁴⁵ However, having placed colour in the third species of

¹⁴⁴ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Insuper, duæ qualitates contrariæ erunt in eadem parte medii per eum cuius oppositum utroque tenet ut patet. Videmus albedinem et nigredinem, tunc albedo producit albedinem et nigredo nigredinem per idem medium. Sed dices, si albedo primo produxit albedinem, nigredo non potest producere nigredinem per idem medium propter contrarietatem illarum formarum inter se. Sed contra. Quando simul applicantur et sunt agentia æqualiter fortia dices quot tunc nihil producet. Contra. Adhuc erit rubedo per vitrum rubrum et aliquis color præcedens.

¹⁴⁵ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Sed proterviendo diceret quod stante rubedine nullius erit alius color.

Aristotelian quality, and since colour is classed specifically as an affection, Mair asserts that “colour is a permanent thing but that the redness or any such colour [in the medium] does not endure in the absence of the object”.¹⁴⁶ It is insufficient to claim, as Ockham might, that not every colour is something permanent, because the redness caused by bashfulness or anger lasts only briefly. As Mair suggests, this does not counter the claim that colour is something permanent: “if one colour is permanent after its production by means of an effective cause then it seems that so also will be any given colour through a small or large duration since colours are of the same nature.”¹⁴⁷

The greatest controversy that occurred in the debate over the existence of species in the medium concerned how to account for action at a distance without any action occurring on that which was intermediate between the cognitive power and the object from which the species were radiating. If one were to ask Lokert why it is necessary to posit the existence of species in the medium he would answer that it is necessary to bridge the cognitive gap that exists between the subject and object. Against his critics he explains that it is not absurd that an agent, such as the species in the medium, should act on something distant and not proximate because that which is proximate is of a different nature than that which is remote.¹⁴⁸ The exact nature of the cognitive contact

¹⁴⁶ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Sed contra totum istud arguitur. Color est res permanens sed illa rubedo vel talis color remoto obiecto non durat.

¹⁴⁷ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Sed dices. Non omnis color est permanens et potes instare de rubedine causata ex verecundia. Sed istud sufficere non videtur, si unus color est permanens post productionem suæ causæ effectivæ, ita videtur de quolibet per parvum tempus vel magnum cum sint eiusdem rationis.

¹⁴⁸ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. c 6^{ra}]. ...ubi quæritur quare ponuntur species potest dici ut dicebatur arguendo ponuntur ne agens naturale agat in distans non agendo in propinquum, nec oppositum probat aliqua ratio vel experientia, sed solum quod non similem producit effectum in propinquum et distans, illud non inconvenit, stat propinquum non esse susceptivum similis effectus sicut distans. Cf., Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. c 4^{vb}]. Tum etiam secundum illam opinionem vel poneretur species propterea quod

possible by means of species in the medium is explored by Gervaise Waim when he distinguishes between mathematical and virtual contact:

It is not universally true that the mover and the moved are together according to mathematical contact but it is sufficient that they are together by means of virtual contact. For the proof of this proposition I at first posit definitions of terms. And I say that things whose ends are together, that is the surfaces, so that between them no body, true or imaginary, mediates are said to touch each other by means of mathematical contact. And this is to have said nothing other than that the bodies are contiguous. But it is said that something is present to another thing by means of virtual contact when it is present in such a way that it is able to cause an effect there, granted that it is not in the same place essentially or through mathematical contact. Granted this, I say with Ockham that for an agent to act on something passive it is not required that the agent and the passive thing are immediate by the immediacy corresponding to mathematical contact, but it is sufficient that they are immediate by the immediacy corresponding to virtual contact. Why the immediacy corresponding to mathematical contact is not required is easy to see, first when the proximate is not susceptible to the effect of the same nature that the distant thing is fitted by nature to receive. For example, the sun produces warmth in the lower regions of the air and not through the sky around the moon, because the sky is not receptive of primary qualities.¹⁴⁹

obiectum non potest agere in distans quin agat in propinquum, vel quia obiectum materiale non potest immediate agere in substantiam immaterialem sicut in intellectum vel aliqua alia ratione. Non videtur alia ratio assignanda nec sufficit aliqua illarum. Non inconvenit agens agere in remotum et non propinquum (ut superius dicebatur) quando propinquum non est susceptivum effectus talis agentis. Idem patet de magnete attrahente ferrum remotum et non lignum propinquum.

¹⁴⁹ Waim. *Tractatus notitiarum Gervasii Waim suevi eiusdem quaestiones in libros Posteriorum resolutionum Philosophi*, (Paris, 1528); [sig. d 2^{va}-v^b]. Non est universaliter verum quod movens et motum sint simul secundum contactum mathematicum, sed sufficit quod sint simul contactu virtuali. Pro cuius propositionis probatione suppono primo definitiones terminorum. Et dico quod

Mair also directs this example against those thinkers like Ockham¹⁵⁰ who deny the existence of species on the grounds that there are moments when species do not affect what is proximate while affecting that which is distant:

You might say that a magnet moves iron at a distance and not the medium. [To this] it is said that it [viz., the magnet] produces something of a different nature in the medium, or granted that it is of the same nature as the quality that attracts the iron, it does not attract other things. For its power by nature is to attract iron to the place of the magnet and not other things of a different nature. If one posits that the iron is destroyed, this argument does not help the arguer, since I ask of him to which place it will have been moved since experience teaches us that the magnet is moved towards the iron. And it is as easy to attract the magnet with the iron as it is to draw the magnet without the iron. The reason is because the magnet attracts the iron and the man only draws the magnet.¹⁵¹

contactu mathematico dicuntur se tangere quorum ultima puta superficies sunt simul, sic quod inter ipsa nullum verum vel imaginarium mediet. Et hoc nihil aliud est dictum quam corpora esse contingua. Sed contactu virtuali dicitur aliquid præsens et immediatum alteri quando sic est præsens quod potest ibi causare effectum dato quod non sit ibidem per essentiam seu per contactum mathematicum. Isto supposito dico cum Ockham quod ad hoc quod agens agat in aliquod passum non requiritur quod agens et passum sint immediata immediatione correspondente tactui mathematico, sed sufficit quod sint immediata immediatione correspondente tactui virtuali. Quare non semper requiratur immediatio correspondens tactui mathematico facile est videre, primo quando propinquum non est susceptivum effectus eiusdem rationis cum effectu quem distans natum est recipere, ut sol producit calorem in infima regione æris non producendo calorem in cælo, eo quod cælum non est receptivum qualitatum primarium. Quoted by Broadie. *Notion and Object*. [pp. 17-18].

¹⁵⁰ One of the objectors is clearly William of Ockham. See Ockham. *Quæstiones in Librum Tertium Sententiarum (Reportatio)*; [p 48 line 16 to p. 56 line 5; n. b. p 48 line 16 to p. 49 line 15].

¹⁵¹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{ra}]. Sed dices magnes movet ferrum distans et non medium. Dicitur quod producit aliquid alterius rationis in medio vel dato quod eiusdem rationis cum qualitate quæ attrahit ferrum, non trahet alia, illa enim virtus est nata trahere ferrum ad locum magnetis et non alia alterius rationis a ferro. Si ponatur ferrum corruptum argumentum non iuvat arguentem quia quæro ab eo ad quem locum movebitur cum experientia doceat quod magnes movetur ad ferrum. Et ita facile est trahere magnetem cum ferro sicut magnetem sine ferro. Et ratio est quia magnes trahit ferrum et homo solum magnetem.

This and similar illustrations are, in the opinion of Mair, among the most powerful reasons by which Durand de St. Pourçain and Ockham deny the existence of species in the medium. However, these are not the only objections. One of the challenges relies on the claim that more should not be posited where fewer suffice: since it is possible to explain the process of cognition without positing the existence of species, it is more reasonable not to posit them. There is no doubt that the principle of economy is both accepted and often deployed by Mair himself. He reaffirms this commitment but explains that this principle does not threaten his claim that the existence of species in the medium is necessary: their existence is confirmed by a whole range of experiences and by the authority of others.¹⁵² The most interesting of the illustrations Mair gives aims to show that species are required to give an account of how it is possible for someone to see his face in a mirror. Species are necessary conditions for the possibility of this seeing, but they are not sufficient; it is also necessary that the agent has the required instruments that permit this seeing—eyes. The eyes of the agent and the species in the medium are partial causes in the act of seeing. It is possible to complicate this illustration: Two mirrors could be made to face each other in such a way that the face of the agent was visible in one and the back of the agent's head in the other. This, and the former illustration, raise some interesting questions since in each case the agent is in a special relation to the object of vision. In all the other examples that have been considered the species of the object radiated through the

¹⁵² Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{va}]. Non est ponenda pluralitas sine necessitate, hoc est, non est ponenda plura ubi paucitas æque rationabiliter sufficit. Modo sunt experientiæ et auctoritates sapientium ut patet 2 *De Anima* Commento 70 et 71. Averroes. *In Aristotelis De anima. Averrois Cordubensis Commentarium Magnum*, ed. F.S. Crawford, in *Aristotelis De Anima Libros Corpus in Commentarium Averrois in Aristotelem*, Volumen 6, Pars 1, (Cambridge, 1953); [pp. 236-239].

medium in such a way that the seeing was both immediate and direct. Thus, to claim that the species were the cause of seeing while not themselves visible, though controversial was, in relative terms, straightforward. Now the images are reflected: Where do we locate the species of the object? Does the species, as a likenesses of the object, really inhere in the mirror? Or, is there really a likeness of the object in the mirror? Or, it may even be asked, are the species somewhere in the air proximate to the mirror? Mair gives the following solution:

The likeness [of the object] is not in the mirror, rather, the visible thing produces its species towards the mirror which are reflected all the way from the mirror to the power of sight. It is not necessary to posit such a likeness in the mirror or in the air, but it is the visible thing itself that is seen by means of a reflected line.¹⁵³

These examples remind us that the origin of the term “species” is the term “*speculum*” and that the implication is that the species of objects are reflections *qua* mirror images of their objects.

Are the species of the same nature in the medium as they are in the corporeal organs of sight? Mair thought that they are and “that it is vain to posit a specific distinction between them”.¹⁵⁴ He also thought that it was probable that the vision caused by the species inhered in the sensitive soul which is distinct from the intellectual soul. After having caused a sensitive notion in the outer sense a notion is caused in inner sense. Then, granting that there is only one soul in a human being, a third notion is caused in the intellect. Now, Mair indicates,

¹⁵³ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{va-vb}]. ...dicitur quod illud simulachrum non est in speculo, sed visibile producit species suas ad speculum usque quæ reflectuntur a speculo ad potentiam visivam. Nec oportet ponere tale simulachrum in speculo vel in ære, sed est ipsum visibile per lineam reflexam.

¹⁵⁴ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{vb}]. ...dicitur quod species sunt eiusdem speciei in medio et in organo naturali, incassum est ponere discrimen specificum.

it seems perhaps that it is superfluous to posit three intuitive notions, or two, one sensitive and the other intellective, that are distinct in species and which inhere in the same subject. For it seems that the intellective notion alone would be sufficient to cause a judgment and for knowing the object.... And thus in the intellect two intellective notions are posited in relation to the object. One is the disposition (*habitus*) or species, and the other the act, which are of different kinds since one actually represents while the other does not. The act is more perfect than the other [viz., the disposition], this is obvious from Books 1 and 10 of the *Ethics*. But it is not the case that on account of this the species is superfluous since in the absence of the object it will cooperate in the production of (*conprincipiat*) the actual notion, nor does the durability of the species imply that it is superior to the act. This is obvious concerning stone, and man, and whiteness and the seeing of it. And though the species present to the intellect is intelligible, nevertheless it does not cause a notion of itself before it causes a notion of the object. On the contrary, it takes the places of the object. For cognition first moves to love of the object which is loved before it moves to love of itself. And vision in the outer sense causes a cognition not of itself but the object of which it is a cognition. So that there are as many species left behind in the intellect as there are things sensed. Second, it follows that some species intensify each other and constitute one quality. This is obvious concerning species of the same kind inhering in the same subject from the beginning. Third, it is obvious that no species are mutually opposed in the intellect. This is obvious since Socrates now has an actual notion of whiteness seen elsewhere, now an actual notion of blackness. Therefore, in his intellect there are first species cooperating in the production of these notions, and if the species of whiteness and of blackness are not opposed, then there will be no fierce fighting between any species.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 3; [fol. 35^{vb}]. Videtur forte superfluum ponere tres notitias intuitivas, vel duas, unam sensitivam et aliam intellectivam specie

Species are partial efficient causes in the production of actual notions. When it is written that there are two intellective notions in respect of an object “one a disposition or species and the other an act” with the explanation that only one actually represents the cognized object, the comparison is between dispositional notions and actual notions. In the same way that a disposition is a partial efficient cause of an actual notion yet is not itself properly and truly called a notion since a cognitive power is not “vitally and formally changed” by such a notion, the same can be said concerning species. While species are the cause and the means by which something is known, they themselves cannot be known. They are present, according to Mair, in every stage of the cognitive process. Species radiate from an object in the medium and activate any one of the sense receptors, they then become known as the sensible species (*species sensibiles*), next they are known as the species of the inner sense, and finally as intelligible species (*species intelligibiles*).

SENSORY AND INTELLECTUAL NOTIONS

Consistent with the Aristotelian claim that “there is nothing in the intellect unless it will have been first in the sense” (*nihil est in intellectu quin prius fuerit in sensu*) it was a universally accepted proposition that

distinctas inhærentes eidem subiecto. Videtur enim quod notitia intellectiva sola sufficeret ad causandum iudicium et ad cognoscendum obiectum... Et sic in intellectu ponuntur duæ notitiæ intellectivæ respectu obiecti, una habitus vel species et actus quæ sunt alterius speciei, cum una actualiter repræsentat non autem alia. Actus est alia perfectior; patet 1 et 10 *Ethicorum* sed non propterea species superfluit quia in absentia obiecti conprincipiat notitiam actualem, nec diuturnitas speciei arguit eam præstare actui. Patet de lapide et homine, albedine et eius visione, et licet species sit intelligibile præsens intellectui non tamen prius causat notitiam sui quam obiecti, immo econtrario supplet vicem obiecti. Cognitio enim prius movet ad dilectionem obiecti quod diligitur quam sui, et visio in sensu exteriori causat cognitionem non sui sed obiecti cuius est. Quo sit ut quot sunt res sensatæ tot sint species derelictæ in intellectu. Secundo sequitur quod aliquæ species sese intendunt et constituunt qualitatem unam. Patet de speciebus eiusdem speciei inhærentibus eidem subiecto primo. Tertio patet quod nullæ species mutuo adversantur in intellectu. Patet quia Sortes nunc habet notitiam actualem albedinis visæ alias nunc nigredinis. Ergo in eius intellectu sunt species primæ conprincipiantes istas notitias et si species albedinis et nigredinis non pugnent, nullæ inter se digladiantur.

outer and inner sensory notions preceded intellectual ones. George Lokert writes that “as regards the production of notions everyone agrees on this matter. In man the first notion of a sensible thing, indeed, the first notion without qualification (*simpliciter*) is an outer sensory one, after that, an inner sensory notion is produced and after that an intellectual notion.”¹⁵⁶ It was also generally agreed that the priority of notions was a natural ordering and not a temporal priority. Mair writes “sensory notions are prior to intellectual ones as regards a priority of nature and of generation though not prior as regards a priority in time or of an instant.”¹⁵⁷ It is a natural priority and not a temporal one because the generation of a sensory notion could occur simultaneously with the generation of an intellectual one.

George Lokert provides the following definitions of sensory and intellectual notions:

I say that a sensory notion is a notion which vitally changes the sense according as it is a notion of that kind and an intellectual notion is one which vitally changes the intellect according as it is of the intellect.¹⁵⁸

Gilbert Crab gives the following criteria in order to distinguish between outer sensory and intellectual notions. Intellectual notions are different from out sensory notions because

every outer sensory notion is singular but of intellectual notions some are singular and others common. Secondly, they differ because every outer sensory notion is intuitive

¹⁵⁶ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. a 7^{ra}-rb]. Ulterius adverte pro ordine productionis talium notitiarum omnes in hoc conveniunt in homine prima notitia rei sensibilis immo prima simpliciter est sensitiva exterior postquam producitur sensitiva interior et post illam intellectiva.

¹⁵⁷ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3 q. 4; [fol. 36^{vb}]. Sensitiva est prior intellectiva prioritate naturali et generationis licet non prior prioritate temporis vel instantis.

¹⁵⁸ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. a 6^{vb}]. Voco notitiam sensitivam illam quæ vitaliter est immutativa sensus secundum quod huiusmodi et intellectivam illam quæ vitaliter est immutativa intellectus secundum quod intellectus.

but not every intellectual notion is intuitive; some are abstractive. Thirdly, they differ because an outer sensory notion is incomplex but not every intellectual notion is incomplex but some are complex. Fourthly, they differ because there can be an intellectual notion of everything in the world but there cannot be a sensitive notion of everything in the world since there cannot be a sensitive notion of the insensible. Fifthly, they differ because more things are required to form a sensitive notion than an intellectual one.¹⁵⁹

In light of what has been said about the order of their generation we shall begin our discussion with a consideration of sensory notions.

Mair gives the following definitions of sensitive notion: “a sensitive notion is a quality by which the sense formally senses”.¹⁶⁰ Sensory notions are divided into outer sensory notions and inner sensory notions. Outer sensory notions are partitioned into five modes of external sensation, viz., visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory. The external senses are modified when impressed upon by species in the medium (*species in medio*). This impression, as we have seen, is not the result of a material migration of the species from the object of cognition to the cognitive power. Rather, the cognitive power is vitally and formally changed by means of the production and multiplication of immaterial species in the medium. Outer sensory notions give rise to mental terms. In light of this previous assertion Mair claims that “it is

¹⁵⁹ Crab. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. b 6^{va}]. Notitia intellectiva prius definitur [See fn. 168] et differt a sensitiva exteriori quia omnis talis est singularis, sed aliqua intellectiva est singularis et aliqua communis. Secundo sic differunt quia omnis notitia sensitiva exterioris est intuitiva, sed non omnis intellectiva est intuitiva, sed aliqua abstractiva. Tertio differunt quia notitia sensitiva exterior est incomplexa, sed non omnis intellectiva quia aliqua est complexa. Quarto differunt quia omnium rerum mundi potest esse notitia intellectiva, sed non omnium potest esse transitiva [=sensitiva] quia non potest esse insensibilium. Quinto differunt quia plura requiruntur ad notitiam sensitivam formandam quam intellectivam.

¹⁶⁰ John Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. π 5^{va}]. Notitia sensitiva est qualitas qua formaliter sensus sentit.

clear that the power of sight (*visus*) and the act of seeing (*visio*) are not the same. The power of sight is the instrument of seeing. Seeing is the act by means of which the eye sees.”¹⁶¹ It was agreed by the members of the circle of John Mair that outer sensory notions are intuitive, categorematic, singular, incomplex, and absolute. Gervaise Waim asserts that it follows from these features of outer sensory notions that it is not possible for the power of external sense to be deceived.¹⁶²

The powers of inner sense are so called because they are not modified by sensible things (*sensibilia*) unless, in the first instance, the external senses have first been modified by sensible things. Moreover, an interior notion is of such a nature that it endures for a longer time than one of the outer sense.¹⁶³ There are four kinds of powers of inner sense, namely, common sense (*sensus communis*), fantasy (*phantasia*), estimative power (*vis æstimativa*) and memory (*memoria*).¹⁶⁴ “Common sense”, Mair writes, “is so called because it knows the sensible, viz., things pertaining to the external senses and the acts of the external senses and judges among them.”¹⁶⁵ In the same way

¹⁶¹ John Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. π 5^{va}]. Et ita est duplex, scilicet exterior quæ iterum est quintuplex. Quædam est visio. Quædam est auditio. Quædam tactio. Quædam olfactio. Quædam gustatio. Ita quod quælibet harum est terminus mentalis. Ex quo perspicuum est non idem est visus et visio. Visus est instrumentum videndi. Visio actus mediante quo oculus videt. Et eodem modo de auditu et auditione et aliis potentiis et earum accidentibus dicatur.

¹⁶² Waim. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. c 3^{vb}]. Prima propositio. Sensus exterior inquantum talis solum format notitias categorematicas, singulares, incomplexas, et absolutas. Unde sequitur quod sensus exterior non potest decipi quia non potest formare iudicium et tantum iudicium est deceptio. See also Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. a 7^{va}]. Dicitur primo potentia sensitiva exterior solum format notitias singulares, incomplexas, et absolutas.

¹⁶³ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. π 5^{va}]. Alia est notita sensitiva interior et talis est diuturnior exteriori.

¹⁶⁴ Mair. *In secundum*, d 8, q. 3; [fol. 55^{rb}]. Quattuor sunt sensus interiores qui interiores dicuntur quia non immutantur a sensibilibus nisi prius sensus exteriores a sensibilibus immutentur, scilicet, sensus communis, phantasia, æstimativa, et memoria.

¹⁶⁵ Mair. *In secundum*, d 8, q. 3; [fol. 55^{rb}]. In primo est sensus communis et dicitur communis quia cognoscit sensibilia videlicet sensuum exteriorum et eorum actus et inter illa iudicat.

that sensible species do not ordinarily inhere in the external senses it is also the case that the common sense is not fitted by nature to retain species for any length of time. It is the function of fantasy to judge of present, sensible species and both to retain and to judge *species reservatae*; i.e., species that are preserved in the absence of the sensible object. Fantasy is a-historical and is not able to discriminate between species in relation to their occurrence in time. The cogitative power (*potentia cogitativa*) in human beings which is the estimative power (*potentia aestimativa*) in animals elicits species of the insensate on the basis of the sensible, for example, the sensible species of a wolf inform a lamb that a wolf is present to the senses and this elicits fear in a lamb and this fear is not present in the sensible species. The memorative function, or the power of inner sense known as memory, preserves species and, like fantasy, it is a container (*arca*) of species. Memory is the power to judge by means of preserved species not only things previously sensed but it is also able to judge of these same things in time. Memorative notions are abstracted from present existence, that is, it is in virtue of these notions that we judge of past existence and no evident judgments, other than the evident judgment concerning the existence of the memorative notion itself, can be made in respect of such notions. Memory's ability to discriminate temporal priority differentiates the memorative power of inner sense from fantasy.

That notions of inner sense are not intellectual notions is obvious because the notions of inner sense have their origin in the powers of inner sense which are said to have physical properties such as being more or less humid and are also said to be spatially located in different regions of the head, for instance, memory is located in the occiput (*in occipite*). The power of inner sense is capable of intuitive and abstractive notions, categorematic and syncategorematic notions,

absolute and connotative notions, complex and incomplex notions, apprehensive and judicative notions.¹⁶⁶ It was also maintained that these notions of inner sense were singular and discrete notions of the sensibles which are, or were, intuitively known by means of the outer senses.¹⁶⁷ In virtue of this it was affirmed that the power of inner sense is not capable of forming a common notion. This is not without qualification. It is stated that this does not rule out the ability of inner sense to form “a common complex notion composed of singulars”. However, it is not possible for the power of inner sense to form an incomplex notion composed of singulars i.e., a universal notion which presupposes an act of will and hence of necessity an act of intellect.

In contrast to sensory notions intellectual notions are not limited to sensitive intuitive notions. Crab explains that “an intellectual notion is a quality which formally changes the intellect and which does not presuppose the external organs”.¹⁶⁸ Crab does not deny that it is not possible for the intellect to be separated in this lifetime, but he does think that the body hinders the mind from knowing its objects.¹⁶⁹ Mair makes the point that “sometimes the intellect has an intellectual notion of something without a sensitive notion of it. This is obvious as regards

¹⁶⁶ Waim. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. c 3^{vb}]. Secunda propositio. Sensus interior tam in homine quam in bruto format notitias complexas et incomplexas, absolutas et connotativas, categorematicas et syncategorematicas, apprehensivas, et iudicativas. Non tamen potest formare notitiam communem. See also Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. a 7^{va}]. Secundo dicitur potentia sensitiva interior potest formare notitias complexas et incomplexas sed non communes.

¹⁶⁷ Crab. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. b 2^{va}]. Sensus interior habet notitias singulares discretissimas illorum sensibilibus quæ a sensu exteriori intuitive cognoscuntur vel aliquando cognoscebantur.

¹⁶⁸ Crab. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. b 1^{rb}]. Notitia intellectiva est qualitas formaliter immutativa intellectus non præsupponens organum exterius.

¹⁶⁹ Crab. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. b 1^{rb}]. Ex isto sequitur quod licet intellectus pro statu isto non possit cognoscere sensibilia intuitive sine organo corporeo ipsa tamen separata cognoscere potest sine quocumque organo. Corpus enim impedit animam ad perfecte cognoscendum obiectum.

the notion we have of God of whom we have no sensitive notion.”¹⁷⁰ Hence, the intellect is not only able to form all the notions of inner and outer sense notions but it is also capable of forming common and incomplex singular notions as well as connotative and absolute notions.¹⁷¹ In light of these characteristics of notions it is difficult to see how the notions of inner sense are to be differentiated from intellectual ones. Indeed Crab points out that “it is difficult to assign a distinction between a inner sensitive notion from an intellective one, but such a distinction can be assigned because sometimes the intellect corrects the inner sense”.¹⁷² For example when the intellect reveals to someone who is dreaming that what he is dreaming is not true.

At this point I report only the most general features of sensory and intellectual notions since a more complete and unified account will emerge as our discussion progresses. I will consider, in turn, the distinction between intuitive and abstractive notions, apprehensive and judicative notions, evident and inevident notions, and theoretical and practical notions.

¹⁷⁰ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. π 5^{vb}]. Dicitur quod nonnumquam habetur notitia intellectiva alicuius rei sine sensitiva eiusdem. Patet de notitia de Deo de quo nullam sensitivam habemus.

¹⁷¹ Waim. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. c 3^{vb}]. Tertia propositio. Intellectus qualescumque notitias sensus format. Potest formare et cum hoc notitias communes. See also Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. a 7^{va}]. Tertio dicitur. Potentia intellectiva format notitias singulares et communes complexas et incomplexas, connotativas et absolutas.

¹⁷² Crab. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. b 6^{va}]. Difficile est assignare discrimen inter notitiam sensitivam interiorem et intellectivam sed talis potest assignari quia nonnumquam intellectus corripit sensum interiorem unde in somnialibus intellectus iudica[n]s illud quod somniatur non esse verum.

CHAPTER 4

INTUITIVE AND ABSTRACTIVE NOTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The members of the circle of John Mair maintained that knowledge, in the strict sense, is acquired in virtue of intuitive notions but knowledge is not of the contingent, it is of the universal. Knowledge concerns the knowable and treats of propositions which are by nature fitted to become necessary and evident by means of syllogistic reasoning. Moreover, scientific propositions are said to be open to question since they are not self-evident propositions (*propositiones per se notæ*).¹⁷³ Mair thinks that why a singular notion is known prior to a universal one is clear from the following:

Every intuitive notion is singular and the abstractive notion caused by it is, in the same way, singular. Any notion that we have is either intuitive or abstractive, or one made up (*fictum*) by the intellect but any given made up notion (*notitia ficta*) presupposes other prior singular notions. This is obvious from the Philosopher and the Commentator (see *Metaphysics* 12, Comment 4): Universals are drawn (*collecta*) from parts to the intellect which perceives (*accipit*) the similarity among them and forms a single intention. This itself is obvious from the first

¹⁷³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 9^{va}]. Primus terminus est scientia quæ est circa propositionem scibilem. Propositio scibilis est propositio necessaria dubitabilis nata fieri evidens per propositiones necessarias evidentes per discursum syllogisticum ad ipsam applicatas. Per primum terminum excluditur propositio contingens ut paries est albus quod licet mihi sit evidens non tamen est scibilis scientia proprie dicta de qua loquitur Aristoteles primo *Posteriorum* et 5 *Ethicorum*. Dicitur "dubitabilis" per hoc namque excluduntur propositiones per se notæ.

book of the *Physics*, Comment 5 that though the individual is not a principle in demonstrative knowledge it is nevertheless a principle of acquisition of the universal which is the foundation of demonstrative knowledge (*doctrina*). Moreover, a good many have singular notions of external sensible things, and of intelligibles in the intellect, who do not form common notions.¹⁷⁴

In this passage there are several issues fundamental to the late-medieval understanding of the nature of the relationship of knowledge of the singular to knowledge of the universal that will require further elucidation. In a moment, detailed attention will be paid to the nature of the relationship of the singular to the universal. However, I shall first attend to some key features of intuitive and abstractive notions. It will be useful to begin our study of intuitive and abstractive notions by introducing some definitions.

INTUITIVE AND ABSTRACTIVE NOTIONS DISTINGUISHED

While it is implicit in all of the definitions provided by the circle of John Mair that sensitive intuitive cognitions are required for evident judgments it is only Gilbert Crab who renders this explicit. Crab gives the following account of intuitive and abstractive notions:

¹⁷⁴ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{ra}]. Omnis notitia intuitiva est singularis, et abstractiva causata ab illa est eodem modo singularis. Quælibet notitia quam habemus est intuitiva vel abstractiva vel una ficta ab intellectu, sed illa ficta præsupponit aliquas notitias singulares priores. Hoc patet per Philosophum [*Metaphysics*, 980^b26-981^a7] et Commentatorem 12 *Metaphysicæ Commento* 4 [Averroes, Juntina 8, 292D]: Universalia sunt collecta ex partibus ad intellectum qui accipit inter ea similitudinem et facit unam intentionem. Hoc ipsum patet 1 *Physicorum Commento* 5 [Aristotle, *Physics*, 189^a6-8 and Averroes Juntina 4, 8FG] quod licet individuum non sit principium scientia demonstrativa est tamen principium acquisitionis universalis quod est principium doctrinæ demonstrativæ. Item plerique habent notitias singulares sensibilium ad extra, et intelligibilium in intellectu, qui non formant notitias communes. References to Averroes are given in Gregory of Rimini. *Gregorii Ariminensis OESA Lectura super primum et secundum sententiarum*, [Volume 1, p. 397]. *Juntina: Aristotelis omnia quæ extant opera et Averrois Cordubensis... commentarii*, ed. Venetiss apud Iunctas. Volumes 1-9, Suppl. 1-3, (1562-1574; Repr., Frankfurt, 1962).

an intuitive notion, according to Ockham in the *Prologue*, is described as follows: it is an incomplex notion of something in virtue of which some contingent truth especially of something present, can be evidently known; for example, the outer vision by which I see Socrates is an intuitive notion of Socrates. Through it I judge evidently that Socrates exists when he exists; and if that same notion were preserved without that object, I would by the same notion judge Socrates not to exist as will be clarified in what follows. But an abstractive notion is a notion of something in virtue of which some truth of something present cannot be known and it is different from an intuitive notion since an intuitive notion is always singular. Some abstractive notions are singular and some common and such a notion is had in the absence of the object and it is never of an outer sense since the outer sense always knows intuitively.¹⁷⁵

The first feature of intuitive notions is that they produce evident assents. In contrast, abstractive notions; whether they are simply abstractive in the sense of abstracted from existence, or abstractive in the sense that the abstractive notion is abstracted from the intuitive notions of many singulars¹⁷⁶; do not produce evident assents to the contingent truths of an object. The latter of these is that which nominalists properly

¹⁷⁵ Crab. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. b 8^{ra}]. Notitiarum alia est intuitiva et alia est abstractiva unde notitia intuitiva, secundum Ockham in *prologo*, sic describitur: est notitia incomplexa alicuius rei virtute cuius potest evidenter cognosci aliqua veritas contingens maxime de præsenti ut visio exterior qua video Sortem est intuitiva Sortis. Per illam iudico evidenter Sortem esse quando est et si conservaretur illa eadem notitia sine obiecto per eandem iudicarem Sortem non esse ut in sequentibus declarabitur. Sed notitia abstractiva est notitia alicuius rei virtute cuius non potest evidenter cognosci aliqua veritas de præsenti et differt ab intuitiva quia intuitiva est semper singularis. Abstractiva aliqua est singularis et aliqua communis et talis notitia habetur in absentia obiecti et numquam est sensus exterioris quia sensus exterior semper intuitive cognoscit. See William of Ockham [Guillelmi de Ockham]. *Opera Theologica. Scriptum in librum primum sententiarum, Prologus et Distinctio Prima (Ordatio.)*, eds. Gedeon Gál and S. Brown (Bonaventure, 1967); [p. 31 line 25 to p. 32 line 5].

¹⁷⁶ Waim. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. e 6^{ra}-rb]. Duplex est abstractiva. Quædam vocatur abstractiva quia a pluribus singularibus abstracta et sic quælibet notitia communis est abstractiva et de tali non oportet quod sit productiva iudicii de fuisse. Alia est abstractiva quæ videlicet est singularis et synonyma cum intuitiva producta a specie vel habitu derelicto et talis est productiva iudicii de fuisse.

understood as the universal and this sense of abstractive is particularly important in developing a coherent understanding of demonstrative knowledge (*scientia demonstrativa*). This will be the topic of discussion in the next section. In this section our attention will be focussed on clarifying the sense of abstractive notion explicitly contrasted, by the members of the circle of John Mair, with intuitive notions as the grounds for evident assents concerning the contingent truths of an object. In later chapters the concept of evidentness will occupy a central position in our discussion, but at this point it is necessary only to note that the essential features of an evident assent are that it is naturally caused, unhesitant and true.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, assent is given only to the objects of a proposition and in the case of intuitive notions, Mair writes that what is at issue is evidentness in a certain respect (*evidentia secundum quid*) or relative evidentness. Relative evidentness is the kind of evidentness caused by intuitive notions of the things signified by the extremes of a proposition, for example, assent to this “Socrates is white”¹⁷⁸. The fact that intuitive notions give rise to experiential knowledge or knowledge of the fact is emphasized by George Lokert who writes :

It is said that an intuitive notion is that through which a contingent truth of the object itself can be known, for example, that it is white or sitting, distant or near, or that the object exists or that it does not exist. In the opposite way, it is said that an abstractive notion is that through which a contingent truth of the object itself cannot be known, and consequently, it is asserted that an experiential judgment (*iudicium experimentale*) is caused by means of an intuitive notion or by several intuitive notions and on

¹⁷⁷ See Chapter 6: Evident Notions and Scientific Knowledge, n. b. pp. 150-155.

¹⁷⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol., q. 3*; [fol. 6^{va}-v^b]. *Evidentia secundum quid causatur ex notitia intuitiva rerum significatarum per extrema propositionis*. Cf., Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. a 5^{ra}]. *Evidentia secundum quid est assensus sine formidine naturaliter causatus quo non est possibile stante Dei influentia generali intellectum assentire et in sic assentiendo decipi*.

account of this the term “to know” (*scire*), taken broadly, understood as experience, is called knowledge (*scientia*).¹⁷⁹

Mair gives substantially the same account of intuitive notion but renders explicit that judgments established on intuitive cognitions are necessarily free from ampliation. He gives the following account:

an intuitive notion is that which is causative of a judgment of the accidental predicates of a thing from which ampliation is excluded. The following description is posited: An intuitive vision of Socrates naturally causes the judgment of the following: “Socrates is large and has a given colour”. And this seeing is called seeing face to face (*visio facialis*). The other [notion] is abstractive and enigmatic. St. Paul mentions (*tango*) this distinction in the First Epistle to the Corinthians Chapter 13: “Now we see through a mirror darkly (*in ænigmate*); then, however, face to face. Now I know only in part (*ex parte*), then, I know as I am known.” In virtue of an abstractive notion I do not make a judgment of the accidental predicates by means of a copula concerning the present [but] I judge correctly that Socrates, who was seen by me, was white.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. c 7^{ra}-rb]. Notitia intuitiva dicitur per quam potest sciri aliqua veritas contingens de ipso obiecto ut quod sit album vel sedens, distans vel propinquum, vel quod illud obiectum existit aut quod ipsum non existit. Et opposito modo dicit notitiam esse abstractivam per quam non potest sciri aliqua veritas contingens de ipso obiecto, et consequenter asserit iudicium experimentale causari mediante notitia intuitiva vel pluribus intuitivis et propterea capit large li scire ut experientia dicatur scientia.

¹⁸⁰ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 32^{va}-vb]. Notitia intuitiva est illa quæ est causativa iudicii de prædicatis accidentalibus rei de qua est seclusa ampliatione. Ponitur hæc descriptio naturaliter visio intuitiva Sortis naturaliter causat iudicium huius Sortes est magnus taliter coloratus. Et vocatur visio facialis. Alia est abstractiva et ænigmatica. Hanc distinctionem tangit Apostolus primæ *ad Corinthios* 13: Videmus nunc per speciem in ænigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem. Nunc cognosco ex parte tantum, tunc autem sicut cognitus sum. Virtute notitiæ abstractivæ non habeo iudicium de prædicatis accidentalibus medietate copula de præsentī bene iudico Sortes a me visus fuit albus. Cf., Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. dd 2^{va}]. Notandum est quod notitia intuitiva est quæ immediate aliquid in se cognoscere ut facialis visio quam de Sorte habeo. Notitia quæ est tactio in sensu tactus, olfactio in sensu olfactus, et ita in aliis, et quælibet talis est discreta suum obiectum cuius est intuitio præcise repræsentans et perfectissimum genus notitiarum est. Quælibet alia notitia vocatur abstractiva. Ista distinctio ex verbis apostoli elicitur: nunc autem per speculum in ænigmate cognoscimus in patria facie ad faciem, facialis et ænigmatica cum istis

An intuitive notion *per se* gives rise only to present tensed contingent judgments which necessarily excludes ampliative terms from such judgments since ampliation “is the supposition of a term for its significate or its significates in relation to terms implying several different tenses”¹⁸¹. Mair continues that in respect of the term “tense” there are five kinds of temporal difference: “is”, “was”, “will be”, “can be” and “is imagined to be”.¹⁸² Hence in virtue of an intuitive notion it is possible to judge that the present tensed proposition “Socrates is white” is true but it is not possible, in virtue of an intuitive notion, to judge that the proposition was true, will be true, or can be true. It is obvious then that intuitive notions represent their objects discretely and more clearly than other notions and therefore are said to be “the most perfect genus of notions”.¹⁸³

Mair thought that it is obvious that it is more probable than not that intuitive and abstractive notions are essentially different in kind (*specie essentiali differe*). He explains: granted that there is an intuitive and an abstractive notion of equal intensity, nevertheless, one notion represents its object more clearly than the other. Therefore, he concludes, they are different in kind.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, intuitive and abstractive notions are essentially different in kind because they originate in different kinds of cause. An intuitive notion naturally requires the presence of the object

coincidunt. Cf., Gregory of Rimini. *Gregorii Ariminensis OESA Lectura super primum et secundum sententiarum*, d. 3, q. 3; [Volume 1, pp. 390-391].

¹⁸¹ John Mair. *De ampliacione* in *In Petri Hispani summulas*, (Paris, 1505); [sig. gg 6^{vb}]. [Ampliatio] est suppositio termini pro suo significato vel suis significatis respectu terminis importantis diversas differentias temporum.

¹⁸² Mair. *De ampliacione*, [sig. gg 7^{ra}]. ...quinque sunt differentiae temporales est, fuit, erit, potest esse, et imaginatur.

¹⁸³ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. dd 2^{va}]. ...et quaelibet talis est discreta suum obiectum cuius est intuitio praecise repraesentans et perfectissimum genus notitiarum est. For more of the relevant passage see fn. 180.

¹⁸⁴ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 1; [fol. 32^{rb}]. Positio tamen illa nobis apparet probabilior quae tenet illas [viz., notitia intuitiva et abstractiva] specie essentiali differre. Quod patet quia illae notitiae supposita aequali intensione diversimode repraesentant suum obiectum una clarius quam alia. Ergo specie distinguuntur.

and depends on it in the same way that light (*lumen*) depends on the luminous (*luminosus*). Moreover, from these features of intuitive notions, it is clear that it is not in our power to determine which intuitive notions we have.¹⁸⁵ It is not possible to positively will against the generation of intuitive knowledge. The relation of the cognitive power to the object of perception is immediate, and it is only when this relation is destroyed that it is not possible to have an intuitive notion of an object. Thus, it is possible to will against the generation of an intuitive notion only insofar as it is possible to destroy the relationship between the cognitive power and the object of perception. For example, the evident judgment “Socrates is white” can be willed against by closing one’s eyes but is not possible to prevent the generation of an intuitive notion without breaking the contact between perceiver and perceived. In contrast, the existence and the kind of abstractive notions that we have, since they are caused by a species of the object and an inner power, can be modified by acts of intellect and acts of will. Abstractive notions can be manipulated. Unlike intuitive notions which naturally require the presence and existence of their objects, the existence of the object in respect of abstractive notions is not required (*peregrina*)¹⁸⁶ The use of the term “*peregrina*” is interesting since it brings to mind the journey of the pilgrim. In the same way that the pilgrim moves away, so too is it possible for existence of the object of an abstractive notion to move away without affecting the status of the notion.

Intuitive notions prepare the way for abstractive notions. Intuitive notions in cooperation with the cognitive power produce a disposition

¹⁸⁵ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 1; [fol. 32^{rb}]. Item causantur a causis diversis. Intuitiva naturaliter exigit præsentiā obiecti et dependet ab eo sicut lumen a luminoso, nec est in potestate nostra sufficienter ex his quæ sunt in nobis.

¹⁸⁶ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 1; [fol. 32^{rb}]. Abstractiva causatur a specie et potentia interiori et est in potestate nostra cui existentia obiecti est peregrina.

which, as experience teaches, facilitates the formation of abstractive notions of objects previously intuitively known. However, this disposition neither facilitates, nor cooperates in, the production of intuitive notions. This is the case because intuitive notions give rise to evident judgments concerning the contingent truths of an object in the presence of the object. For example, I judge in virtue of an intuitive notion that an object is white and that it exists. However, in light of an abstractive notion no such judgment is forthcoming.¹⁸⁷ Abstractive notions, since they make no claim as regards the accidental predicates or contingent truths of objects require neither the presence nor the continued existence of their objects. Abstractive notions abstract from existence.

There is, of course, the issue of the relationship of sensitive intuitive notions which cause judgments such as ““Socrates is white” to abstractive notions like “Socrates, whom I have just seen, was white”” which are essentially intellective notions that abstract not only from existence, but also include ampliative terms. Are such judgments effectively caused by sensitive or intellectual intuitive notions? Mair responds that there are instances when intellectual judgments are caused solely in virtue of intellectual intuitive notions, “as is obvious from the judgment that we have concerning acts of intellect or acts of will where there is no sensitive intuitive notion and this will be the case in a mind separated (sc., from body)”. However, “a sensitive intuitive notion in the case of contingent truths is not superfluous since it is a prior disposition or the cause of the intellectual intuitive notion.”¹⁸⁸ It is only

¹⁸⁷ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 1; [fol. 32^{va}]. Notitia enim intuitiva producit unum habitum quicquidem habitus faciliat nos ad eundem in notitias abstractivas obiecti prius intuitive cogniti ut experientia docet sed non producit notitiam intuitivam cum non possumus iudicare de obiecto sicut dum erat in præsentia.

¹⁸⁸ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 1; [fol. 32^{vb}]. Quando iudicium est intellectivum causatur a notitia intuitiva intellectiva, ut patet de iudicio quod habemus de

in virtue of the sensitive intuitive notion that it is possible to have an intellectual intuitive notion in respect of the contingent truths of an object.

INTUITIVE AND ABSTRACTIVE NOTIONS TERMINATE AT THE SAME OBJECT

The question “Whether an abstractive notion terminates at the same object as an intuitive notion?” was the subject of detailed consideration because of its implications for the possibility of having immediate knowledge of the external world. Mair writes that on this matter there are two opinions. The first response, which is attributed to Gregory of Rimini in the margin of the text, denies that intuitive and abstractive notions terminate at the same object.¹⁸⁹ Mair reports Gregory’s position as follows:

Intuitive notions terminate immediately at their objects while abstractive notions terminate at two different objects: the first object of an abstractive notion is the species in relation to which there is an intuitive notion, and the second object of an abstractive notion is the object first known intuitively at which the abstractive notion terminates secondarily, and in relation to which the notion is said to be abstractive. And though the species is known through that cognition, nevertheless we do not experience, nor do we know evidently in virtue of that abstractive cognition, that the species is of such a thing. That is, we experience the thing which is a species. But we do not experience it as a

actibus intellectus vel voluntatis ubi nulla est notitia intuitiva sensitiva, et ita erit in anima separata, sed notitia intuitiva sensitiva nunc non superfluit, quia est dispositio prævia, vel causa notitiæ intellectivæ.

¹⁸⁹ Gregory of Rimini. *Gregorii Ariminensis OESA Lectura super primum et secundum sententiarum*, d. 3, q. 3; [Volume 1, p. 392]. Similiter, si notitia non immediate terminetur ad rem sed ad eius representativum [sc., species], sive illa res existat sive non, abstractive cognoscitur. Et ideo, si significationem vocabuli quis velit ponderare, talis notitia videtur dicenda abstractiva, non quia abstrahat ab existentia rei, quasi ipsa existentia non possit abstractive cognosci, nec quia quodammodo abstrahit a præsentialitate obiectiva rei cognitæ. Nam in tali notitiæ modo non obicitur ipsa res immediate menti secundum se, ut dictum est, sed aliquod eius representativum et ideo quasi absens videtur cognosci res ipsa.

species, but we conclude that this is the case only probably and discursively.¹⁹⁰

A notion is called abstractive not because it abstracts from existence, nor because it abstracts from the contingent truths of singulars. It is called abstractive, according to Gregory, because the cognition terminates at a representative of the object.

Opposed to this position Mair argues:

Through an abstractive cognition naturally following an intuitive notion [the object] is known directly. And in the first instance that which was first known was known intuitively; but that was not the species enduring in the mind. Therefore [an abstractive notion does not terminate at the species]. The major premise is proved since there is no particular (*proprium*) simple abstractive notion of anything unless the thing was first known intuitively because experience teaches that my thinking is indifferently about things I have seen or heard since I think directly about such things.¹⁹¹

Mair continues:

it is vain to posit that we know two objects by means of the same notion, one intuitively and the other abstractively, since everything can be preserved (*salvari*) by means of a notion of an external object. Again, either the species

¹⁹⁰ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 33^{rb}]. Circa hanc quaestionem duæ sunt opiniones. Una negative respondens tenens [*in marg.* Hactenus Grego. in secundo] quod notitia intuitiva immediate terminatur ad obiectum, abstractiva autem habet duo obiecta. Unum est species respectu cuius est notitia intuitiva, alterum est obiectum prius intuitive cognitum ad quod secundario terminatur respectu cuius dicitur notitia abstractiva. Et licet species per illam cogitationem cognascatur non tamen experimur nec evidenter cognoscimus virtute illius cognitionis quod illa sit species talis rei, hoc est, rem quæ est species experimur non tamen experimur illam esse speciem sed hoc solum discursive et probabiliter concludimus.

¹⁹¹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 33^{rb}]. Contra istam opinionem arguitur sic. Per cognitionem abstractivam naturaliter consequentem intuitivam cognoscitur directe, et primo illud quod primo fuit cognitum intuitive. Sed illud non fuit species manens in anima. Ergo. Maior probatur quia nullius rei naturaliter habemus propriam simplicem abstractivam nisi prius fuerit cognitum intuitive quia experientia docet quod cogitatio mea fertur indifferenter super ea quæ vidi vel audivi quia directe de re tali et tanta.

would terminate at something immediately or not. The second alternative should not be maintained by you. If the first alternative is held; then, in the same way, an abstractive notion ought to terminate immediately at an external thing. Thus, it is superfluous to posit an actual notion terminating immediately at the species and mediately at the external object.¹⁹²

This is, as Mair points out, a position untenable by anyone, especially Gregory of Rimini.

Despite Mair's rejection of Gregory's position, he is not averse to adopting certain elements of his opponent's system which though true are assumed falsely in the course of Gregory's proof.¹⁹³ In other words, Mair explicitly adopts only those propositions which he thinks actually refute the position Gregory is attempting to advance. In the first instance Gregory

supposes something which anyone is able to experience in themselves, namely, that whenever someone thinks about some sensible thing not then present that he has seen elsewhere, for example, something which is a lion or is like a lion is an immediate object of his cognition. Just as when someone sees with his eyes the colour on the wall that colour is the immediate object of his seeing so also, therefore, I always experience with certainty.... Gregory in his reasoning argues as follows: there is no reason why a person sees that some thing exists (*esse*) through the external sense and sees other contingent truths about the thing except that he knows the thing in itself immediately.

¹⁹² Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 33^{rb-va}]. Præterea frustra ponitur quod per eandem notitiam cognoscamus duo obiecta, unum intuitive et aliud abstractive cum omnia possint salvari cognoscendo solum per illam notitiam obiectum ad extra. Rursus vel species terminatur ad rem ad extra immediate vel non. Secundum non est dicendum per te. Si primum ergo eodem modo notitia abstractiva debet immediate terminari ad obiectum ad extra. Et sic supervacaneè ponitur notitiam actualem terminari ad speciem immediate et mediate ad obiectum ad extra.

¹⁹³ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 33^{va}]. Ponit Gregorius aliquas conclusiones quas reputo veras licet in probatione (opinionem meam) falsa assumat. Et assumo solum aliqua quæ conclusioni positæ repugnare videntur.

So therefore this would be the case in the foregoing if the internal cognition itself terminated immediately at the external object. To this position his contemporary [sc., Rathe Scotus] answered saying that there was another reason since the seeing by the external sense is an intuitive notion in virtue of which such contingent truths are able to be known. But the cognition of an absent thing is an abstractive notion by which such truths cannot be known. But he himself [sc., Gregory] argues against this by asking which notion and on what basis something is called an intuitive notion of something. Either you might say that an intuitive notion is that which terminates immediately [and] objectively at that thing and therefore you say that it is intuitive since it terminates immediately. And then it follows that if the interior cognition is immediately terminated at the external thing that cognition is an intuitive notion. And further the inference follows [viz., that the cognition is an abstractive notion]. Or you might say that the notion is intuitive since (as some say) that by means of an intuitive notion one is able to know that the thing is if it is and know that the thing is not if it is not and other contingent truths concerning the thing. And when it is said that this cannot be known by means of such a notion since it is it not intuitive and through it can because it is intuitive, that is no different than saying that through it [sc., abstractive notion] one is not able [to know such truths] and at the same time to say that one is able to [know such truths] since, by means of it [sc., an abstractive notion], one is able to [know such truths]. And this is to resolve the question by itself. Similarly, another person could have said that it can be known through cognition, and not through seeing, therefore, it would be called intuitive and the outer seeing abstractive.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 33^{va}]. Et primo supponit unum quod quilibet experiri potest in seipso, videlicet quod quandocumque aliquis cogitat de aliqua re sensibili non tunc præsente quam alias vidit, verbi gratia, de leone ita suæ cognitioni immediate obiicitur aliquid quod est leo vel simile leoni. Sicut cum quis intuetur oculis colorem in pariete immediate sue visioni obiicitur color ille sic ergo pro certo semper experior... Arguit ratione Gregorius sic. Quia nulla ratio est propter quam videns rem aliquam immediate per sensum exteriorem

The critics of Gregory of Rimini draw to our attention that if you accept Gregory's position and grant that intuitive and abstractive notions terminate at their objects with different immediacy then you must accept that there is an unbridgeable gap between abstractive notions and the external object. Both Rathe Scotus¹⁹⁵ and Ockham thought that it was necessary for abstractive notions and intuitive notions to terminate with the same immediacy at the external object. Rathe Scotus preserves the distinction between abstractive and intuitive notions by claiming that intuitive notions are contingent upon the presence of the object to the senses. Similarly, Ockham argues that intuitive notions allow judgments about the existence and non-existence of the object where abstractive notions do not. If one accepts Gregory's claim that an abstractive notion terminates immediately at the intuitive notion and only mediately, or secondarily at the external object, then one is effectively claiming that an abstractive notion is simultaneously abstractive and intuitive. This is

novit illam esse, et alias veritates contingentes de ipsa nisi quia illam in seipsa immediate cognoscit. Ita igitur esset in proposito si cogitatio ipsa interior ad rem extra immediate terminaretur. Ad hoc respondebat (*in marg.*, Ioannes Scotus) eius concurrens dicens quod alia ratio erat, scilicet, quia visio sensus exterioris est notitia intuitiva cuius virtute tales veritates contingentes cognosci possunt. Cogitatio vero rei absentis est notitia abstractiva per quam non possunt tales veritates cognosci. Sed contra hoc arguit ipse quærendo quam notitiam et qua ratione vocabat intuitivam alicuius rei, aut enim eam que immediate terminatur obiective ad illam rem, et ideo dicis eam intuitivam quia sic immediate terminatur. Et tunc sequitur quod si cogitatio interior immediate terminatur ad rem ad extra, ipsa est notitia intuitiva. Et ulterius sequitur illatum. Vel dicis intuitivam quia (ut aliqui dicunt) potest per illam sciri esse si est, et non esse si [non] est, et alias veritates contingentes de illa. Et cum dicitur hoc non potest sciri per huiusmodi notitiam, quia non est intuitiva et per illam potest quia est intuitiva, non est aliud quam dicere per illam non potest et per illam potest, quia potest per illam. Et est solvere quæstionem per seipsam. Similiter poterat alius dicere per cogitationem potest illud cognosci et non per visionem eo quod illam dicet intuitivam et visionem exteriorem abstractivam.

¹⁹⁵ It is certain that the *Ioannes Scotus* to whom a reference appears in the margins is John Rathe Scotus. John Rathe, is reported by Gregory to have been one of his opponents who had aligned himself with William of Ockham in his bid to eliminate species in the medium from the cognitive process. Alphonsus Vargas de Toledo, to whom we are indebted for our knowledge of Rathe's philosophical position, refers to Rathe's arguments as both "beautiful and subtle". See D. E. R. Watt. *A Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Graduates to A.D. 1410*, (Oxford, 1977); [pp. 465-466] and Tachau. *Vision and Certitude*, [pp. 368-371].

tantamount to claiming that by means of an abstractive notion one can and cannot make judgments about the existence and non-existence of object. An abstractive notion cannot be both not abstractive and abstractive. Mair responds to these various positions which are opposed to Gregory of Rimini's position by favouring the response of John Rathe Scotus and Ockham but indicates his preference for the latter position. This is despite the fact that both these thinkers had denied the existence of species in the medium as part of the cognitive process. He explains:

I answer by denying that the given response is not valid. And when he argues in the course of his inquiry I grant the second part of the argument since, naturally, by reason of an intuitive notion we form a judgment concerning the existence of the thing and concerning the accidental predicates of it, not that the intuitive notion causes a notion concerning the non-existence of a thing, though by the definition of "intuitive notion" and its judgment we know discursively that the thing is not present; just as, by the deprivation of light the intellect knows shadows. And when he says that this is to solve the question by itself, because the other [sc., Gregory] said that by means of an abstractive notion a judgment is generated by which we judge of the accidental predicates of the thing and not through the intuitive [notion], this should not be said. It is well known that we have two notions and in virtue of one we are able to judge much that we are not able to judge in virtue of the other. The former we call intuitive and the latter abstractive. The abstractive immediately terminates at the external thing and nevertheless in virtue of it we are not able to judge of the accidental predicates of the thing.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 33^{va-vb}]. Respondeo negando quod responsio data non valet. Et quando arguit inquisitive do secundum membrum quia naturaliter ratione notitiæ intuitivæ formamus iudicium de existentia rei, et de prædicatis accidentalibus eius, non quod illa notitia causat iudicium de non existentia rei licet per definitionem notitiæ intuitivæ et eius iudicii discursive cognoscimus rem non esse præsentem sicut per defectum luminis intellectus cognoscit tenebras. Et cum dicit hoc est solvere quæstionem per seipsam quia alius (sc., Gregorius Ariminensis) diceret per notitiam abstractivam generatur iudicium quo iudicamus prædicata accidentalialia de re et non per intuitivam. Istud

The impact of Gregory of Rimini as a critic of Ockhamist epistemology could not be ignored by Mair who derived a number of his insights from William of Ockham. The second argument of Gregory to which Mair responds is reported as follows:

Second, he argues by inquiring into how through that which you call intuitive such truths can be known. It does not seem that there is any reason except this, namely, that it is terminated immediately and objectively at the external thing. Therefore, similarly it should be said concerning cognition if it terminated immediately at the thing. Afterwards, if you wish, you may call it either intuitive or abstractive since it does not matter what words you use. Therefore, what is left is that at which such a cognition is immediately and objectively terminated is not something external.¹⁹⁷

Mair answers that “the reason (*causa*) is because cognition is itself of such a nature”.¹⁹⁸ He explains that “we experience in the presence of an object that we have a notion which causes in us an evident judgment that it is of such a colour and shape”.¹⁹⁹ Mair envisages the following

nihil est dictum. Palam enim est a nobis habere duas notitias et virtute unius multa possumus iudicare quæ non possumus iudicare virtute alterius. Priorem intuitivam vocamus et posteriorem abstractivam. Abstractiva terminatur immediate ad rem ad extra et tamen virtute illius non possumus iudicare de prædicatis accidentalibus illius rei.

¹⁹⁷ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 33^{vb}]. Secundo arguit quærendo quare per illam quam dicis intuitivam possunt tales veritates cognosci. Nec videtur quod ratio aliqua reddi potest præter hanc scilicet quod immediate obiective terminatur ad rem ipsam igitur similiter dicendum erit de cogitatione si immediate ad rem terminetur. Si eam postmodum velles vocare intuitivam sive abstractivam quia de vocabilis non debet esse cura. Relinquitur ergo quod illud ad quod cogitatio talis immediate obiective terminetur non est res aliqua ad extra. See Gregory of Rimini. *Gregorii Ariminensis OESA Lectura super primum et secundum sententiarum*, d. 3, q. 3; [Volume 1, 390]. Si quis autem non velit tales notitias simplices vocare intuitivas vel abstractivas sed aliter, et alias velit his nominibus nuncupare, liberum ei est nec de nomine debet fieri contentio, dummodo constet de re, scilicet quo quædam est notitia simplex qua res immediate in se cognoscitur, et quædam qua mediante aliquo repræsentativo cognito.

¹⁹⁸ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 33^{vb}]. Ad secundum dico quod causa est quia talis ipsa est talis naturæ.

¹⁹⁹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 33^{vb}]. Quæro ab eo quare ignis calefacit. Experimur quod in præsentia obiecti habemus unam notitiam quæ in nobis causat iudicium evidens quod res præsens est talis coloris, talis figuræ.

kinds of situation: when we experience a fire we might judge that it is small or large, and that it is either warm or hot. Mair continues: “The situation is different as regards a notion that we have in the absence of the object”.²⁰⁰ In the absence of an object it is not possible to have evident judgments regarding its contingent properties. Hence, in the absence of a fire, it is not possible to judge that a fire is large or small or that it is warm or hot. Mair agrees that the terms employed to refer to intuitive and abstractive notions are simply conventions but this does not make them any the less legitimate.²⁰¹ He concludes that “the complex judgment following that intuitive notion is also called an intuitive notion”.²⁰² Undoubtedly, the complex judgment to which Mair refers in this instance is the proposition to which the intuitive notion itself gives rise. The judgment is therefore complex by extrinsic denomination.²⁰³ Mair infers from the above that it is obvious that intuitive and abstractive notions are not differentiated on account of their terminating at an external object with different immediacy since “each terminates equally immediately at the external object”.²⁰⁴

Thirdly, Mair reports, that it is argued that intuitive and abstractive notions terminate at different objects on the basis that it is possible for someone who has never sensed a given thing by means of the external senses to have that thing as an object of thought in the same way as someone who has experienced that thing by means of the external senses. He writes:

²⁰⁰ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 33^vb]. Secus est de notitia quam habemus in absentia rei.

²⁰¹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 33^vb]. Quocumque nomine non refert, sed in modo loquendi una vocatur intuitiva et altera abstractiva.

²⁰² Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 33^vb]. Et potest dici quod iudicium complexum sequens illam notitiam intuitivam etiam vocetur notitia intuitiva.

²⁰³ For a discussion of extrinsic denomination see pp. 147-149.

²⁰⁴ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 33^vb]. Ex isto patet quod non est propterea quia terminatur ad obiectum ad extra cum utraque æque immediate ad obiectum ad extra terminetur.

someone who has seen an elephant describes to someone, who has never seen one, that it is of such a shape or that its limbs are organized in a certain way. There occurs in the listener a likeness of the elephant which occurs to the speaker especially if he describes the elephant distinctly and perfectly and this description stimulates the internal powers of the listener. It is agreed that on hearing this description the notion would not terminate at a true elephant outside the mind since it is not universal, since such is not granted, nor is it any or every singular. This is clear. Nor is there any reason why it should be one singular than another, since no elephant will ever have been seen by the hearer. Therefore, no real elephant is an immediate object for the listener, nor therefore for the speaker.²⁰⁵

Mair begins resolving this objection by indicating the issues that require clarification:

according to him (sc., Gregory) an abstractive notion terminates immediately at the species and mediately at the external thing. I ask at which species this abstractive notion terminates. It does not terminate at the species of elephant "a" since this elephant is not sensed. And as a result no simple and singular notion is had of an elephant "a". In the same way this would be true of any other elephant.²⁰⁶

Hence, according to Mair, Gregory's position fails to show in what way the notion caused by the description is simple and singular granted since an intuitive notions is by its very nature simple, singular, and true. The

²⁰⁵ Mair. *In primum*, q. 3, d. 2; [fol. 34^{ra}]. ...aliquis qui vidit elephantem narrat alicui qui numquam vidit, qualis figuræ sive dispositionis membrorum sit, audienti occurrit simile eius quod occurrit narranti præsertim si ille distincte narrat et perfecte, et audiens bene viget potentiis interioribus et constat quod audienti non obiicitur verus elephans extra animam, quia non universalis, cum non sit dare talem, nec quælibet vel omnis singularis. Hoc est clarum. Nec est ratio quare unus singularis potius quam alius, cum ipse numquam aliquem viderit. Igitur nullus verus elephans obiicitur immediate tali audienti, igitur nec narranti.

²⁰⁶ Mair. *In primum*, q. 3, d. 2; [fol. 34^{ra}]. Quia secundum eum notitia abstractiva terminatur immediate ad species et mediate ad rem ad extra tamen quæro ad quas species ista notitia terminatur. Non ad species "a" elephantis quia talis non est sensatus. Et per consequens nulla simplex et singularis notitia habetur "a" elephantis. Et eodem modo respectu cuiuslibet alterius elephantis.

second difficulty is that in the position espoused by Gregory the “abstractive notion terminates mediately at the object according to him and the mediate object is the elephant. I ask at which elephant does the abstractive notion terminate? And this seems of equal weight against the advocate of this position as it is against its opponents. Therefore, whether it is solved or not, no one ought to be led by this argument to hold this opinion with him.”²⁰⁷ On the basis of these claims Mair writes:

And I say to his argument two things. The first response is: whatsoever species is discovered, at which that cognition is terminated, that species is of some object or of some objects. Moreover, the cognition terminates at that object or at those objects of which it is a or of which they are a species, but never at the species. Secondly, I say that he has no notion which has terminated at a given elephant but he has a notion which terminated at sensed things. I have been told that an elephant is an animal with a big, curved nose, is white in color, is carrying a castle on its back. Prior to having seen the elephant I have seen noses, and white horses, and castles. I form notions of these other things sensed by me. I think about a white horse seen by me, and about a stony skin nose which I have seen depicted. And likewise with the castle. Moreover the intellect is able to unite these simple notions and to apply them interchangeably believing that those notions represent that elephant though they represent no particular elephant’. Perhaps one believes that one has a concept of an elephant just as a man having a concept of a human being and a donkey unites the concepts in an incompatible manner (*modo impossibili*). For example, as is obvious in the case of someone dreaming and this someone is able to do while awake. Sometimes someone is able to unite the concepts of things sensed together which agree with a possible being. Now, I myself have never in fact seen the city which is called St. Andrews but through those who report to me about its [castle, the monastery, the ocean, the

²⁰⁷ Mair. *In primum*, q. 3, d. 2; [fol. 34^{ra}]. Rursus notitia abstractiva terminatur mediate ad obiectum per eum. Et obiectum mediatum est elephans. Quæro ad quem elephantem terminatur. Et sic hoc videtur æqualis ponderis contra factorem sicut contra adversarios. Ergo sive solvatur sive non nemo debet duci hoc argumento ad opinandum cum eo.

college, and other things I form my idea about those other things sensed by me and this idea is terminated at those things seen before and it is terminated at the conglomeration of these things which are able to be combined simultaneously into the composition of a city and thus this composition is of possible things.²⁰⁸

It is beyond a doubt that, according to Mair there is simply no possible justification for the claim that intuitive and abstractive notions terminate at different objects: Intuitive and abstractive notions terminate at the same external object with equal immediacy.

ABSTRACTIVE NOTIONS AS THE BASIS FOR DEMONSTRATIVE KNOWLEDGE

In the first section we canvassed various aspects of intuitive notions and limited our discussion of abstractive notions to the sense of being abstracted from existence. In this section we will explicitly consider the relationship of the singular intuitive notion and abstractive notion to the formation of universal abstract notions; for it is in virtue of intuitive and abstractive notions that universal notions are possible. It will be helpful to recall Mair's definition of a universal notion.

²⁰⁸ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 2; [fol. 34^{ra}]. Et dico ad argumentum duo. Primum est. Quacumque specie reperta ad quam illa cogitatio terminatur illa est species alicuius obiecti vel aliquorum. Cogitatio autem terminatur ad illud obiectum vel illa obiecta cuius vel quorum species, sed nullatenus ad species. Secundo dico quod nullam notitiam habet terminatam ad aliquem elephantem sed habet notitiam terminatam ad res sensatas. Narratur mihi elephanteus est animal magno et curvo naso, albi coloris, ferens castellum in dorso. Ante ea vidi nasos et equos albos, et castellum. Formo notitias illarum rerum alias a me sensatarum. Cogito de equo albo a me viso et de naso lapideo quem vidi depictum. Et ita de castro. Intellectus autem potest unire illas notitias simplices et eas applicare mutuo credens quod illæ notitiæ repræsentent elephantem quæ nullum repræsentant. Forte credit se habere conceptum elephantis sicut homo habens conceptum hominis et asini unit illos conceptus modo impossibili ut patet in somniantem et hoc facere potest in vigilia. Interdum quis potest unire conceptus rerum sensatarum mutuo quod enti possibili convenient. Ego iam de facto numquam vidi urbem nomine Sanctum Andream per eos qui mihi referunt de arce, cenobio, oceano, et collegio, et reliquis fingo cogitatum meum super res alias a me sensatas quæ cogitatio ad res illas ante visas terminatur et ad illarum rerum congeriem quæ possunt simul colligi ad urbis compositionem et sic compositio rerum possibilium.

Any notion that we have is either intuitive or abstractive, or one made up (*fictum*) by the intellect but any given made up notion (*notitia ficta*) presupposes other prior singular notions. This is obvious according to the Philosopher and the Commentator (see *Metaphysics* 12, Comment 4): Universals are drawn (*collecta*) from parts to the intellect which perceives (*accipitur*) the similarity among them and forms a single intention. This itself is obvious from the first book of the *Physics*, Comment 5 that though the individual is not a principle in demonstrative knowledge it is nevertheless a principle of acquisition of the universal which is the foundation of demonstrative knowledge (*doctrina*) Moreover, a good many have singular notions of externally sensible things, and of the intelligible in the intellect, who do not form common notions.²⁰⁹

However, it might be objected that the proper interpretation of Aristotle's remark in the *Physics* is to imply that the natural way (*via innata*) of knowing proceeds from that which is more universal to that which is less universal. This was the position favoured by Aquinas²¹⁰ who in support of it borrowed the following from the *Physics*:²¹¹ Children at first call all women— "mother", and in the same way, they initially call all men— "father". It is only after they have become accustomed to calling by name that they determine which refer to this person or that person as "mother" or "father".²¹² This position is

²⁰⁹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{ra}]. For the Latin see fn. 174. Cf., Gilbert Crab. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. c 4^{rb}-va]. ...prima notitia sensus est notitia intuitiva. Sic similiter prima notitia intellectus. Modo omnes tales notitiæ sunt singulares unde pro universale in proposito intelligas conceptum communem pluribus rebus aut signum aliquid significans. Hoc supposito, sic arguo. Antequam universale formetur ab intellectu aliquod singulariter est cognitum. Igitur. Singulariter est prius cognitum ab intellectu quam universale. Antecedens patet quia implicat abstrahere conceptum universalem ab aliquibus rebus nisi illæ res fuerint prius cognitæ vel ergo cognoscuntur in seipsis et tunc habetur propositum quod intuitive cognoscuntur quia quælibet talis est singularis aut in specie et iterum habetur intentum.

²¹⁰ Aquinas. *Summa Theologiæ*, Prima Pars, q. 85, a. 3.

²¹¹ Aristotle. *Physics*, [184^b12-14].

²¹² Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{ra}]. Sed contra istam conclusionem arguitur a magis universalibus ad minus universalia innata est nobis via, primo *Physicorum*. Hoc probat Philosophus a signo: pueri primo appellant omnes

strengthened by the argument that when something is perceived at a distance it is first known under the concept of being and afterwards we know that, that being is a body and are uncertain as to whether it is a tree or an animal. Later still it is known to be an animal but there is doubt as to its species. Finally, it is known that it is a human being and that it is neither Socrates nor Plato. Therefore, the opponents of Mair concluded that the origin of notions proceeds from the universal to the particular.²¹³

In response to this position Mair claims that this is to misunderstand the doctrine for which Aristotle was arguing. His response draws our attention to the fact that one must distinguish between the order in which knowledge is acquired (*ratio cognoscendi*) and the order in which knowledge ought to be expounded (*ratio docendi*). Mair writes "Aristotle intends to show that having to teach some doctrine to the community one ought to begin from the more universal and gradually descend to singulars which he himself undertakes in that part of the *Physics* writing (*tradens*), in the first instance, about being in motion (*de ente mobili*)."²¹⁴ Mair continues that it is obvious that the illustration employed by his opponents does not advance their position granted that a lamb, which has never formed a universal, judges that this white sheep is its mother and afterwards that it this one or that one. This originates in the fact that in the beginning they have notions that are imperfect in kind or in degree. Or, on account of

feminas matres, postea hanc vel illam; sic omnes viros patres, postea determinate hunc vel illum appellitant.

²¹³ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{ra}]. Et confirmatur. Quando aliquid sentitur a remotis primo cognoscitur sub conceptu entis et scimus illud esse ens, postea corpus, dubitantes an sit arbor an animal. Postea cognoscitur esse animal dubitando de qua specie animalis et post[ea] cognoscitur esse homo et non Sortes neque Plato. Ergo origo notitiæ provenit ab universalioribus procedendo ad singularia.

²¹⁴ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{ra}]. Philosophus enim vult ostendere quod habens tradere aliquam doctrinam communitati debet prius incipere ab universalioribus et gradatim descendere ad singularia quod ipse in illa parte facit in primis de ente mobili tradens in libris *Physicorum*.

the abundance of humours the notion is insufficient to cause a judgment concerning the proposition: "This is mother". Nevertheless that notion causes a judgment through which the lamb judges that this is its mother and not an ass. Afterwards, having a more perfect dispositional notion, it judges better. This is similar to the way that little children judge wrongly.²¹⁵

In a similar way, the claim that something perceived at a distance is first known under the universal concept of being and then under the less universal concept of species, etc., is almost solved. Mair explains that while someone who sees something at a distance has a singular intuitive notion of that which the notion represents, that notion is not in-itself sufficient to cause a judgment concerning a proposition such as "This is Socrates." or "This is Plato.". It is, however, quite sufficient to cause a judgment concerning a proposition such as "This is this." It is only when one draws nearer to the object that a more perfect notion is had of the object and this notion causes a judgment that this object is Socrates or that this object is a human being.²¹⁶ It is obvious that Mair is indicating that we do not judge an object under the concept of being because knowledge of the universal precedes knowledge of the singular; rather, he is claiming that we place distant objects under common or universal

²¹⁵ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{ra}]. Et quod signum Philosophi assumptum non iuvat adversarios patet de agno qui nullatenus format universalialia qui in primis quamlibet ovem albam quam iudicat esse matrem postea hanc vel illam. Hoc provenit propterea quod in principio habent notitias imperfectas sive in specie sive in gradu, sive propter abundantiam humorum qui non causat iudicium sufficiens de hoc complexo, "hæc est mater". Illa notitia tamen causat iudicium per quod agnus iudicat ovem esse matrem et non asinum. Postea habita perfectiori notitia melius iudicat sic est de puerulis sinistre iudicantibus.

²¹⁶ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{ra-rb}]. Confirmatio ferme solvitur quia dum quis videt aliquid a remotis habet notitiam intuitivam de illo quæ est singularis repræsentans rem demonstratam, sed illa notitia non sufficit causare iudicium de hoc complexo "hoc est Sortes" bene causat tale iudicium "hoc est hoc". Accedente obiecto habetur perfectior notitia illius quæ causat iudicium quod hoc est Sortes vel homo.

concepts in virtue of the fact that at a distance we are able to have only imperfect notions of those objects.

An opponent of the solution Mair proposes might ask on what basis one is more likely to form a judgment concerning the proposition “This is a body” rather than assenting to the proposition “This is an animal” or “This is a human being”.²¹⁷ The reason, according to Mair,

is that it is more difficult to judge difference among animals themselves of among human beings than to apprehend that this is a body. It is easier to know the whole than the parts. Now the superior is a kind of whole, but here vague singular notions are had first which are united by means of demonstrative pronoun and a common term, or, this aggregate takes the place of a singular term not yet imposed.²¹⁸

This is challenged on the grounds that “since universals are better known to us it would follow that metaphysics is prior to other sciences in the way of expounding doctrine since metaphysics concerns the most universal.”²¹⁹ Mair declares that “this consequence is null but claims that the difficulty with metaphysics does not arise with respect to universals; rather, the difficulty originates because it repeatedly descends to the most specific things quidditatively considered and touches upon God and separated intelligences which are difficult to

²¹⁷ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{rb}]. Sed rogabis quid causæ est quare magis format iudicium de hoc complexo, “hoc est corpus”, quam de isto, “est animal vel homo”.

²¹⁸ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{rb}]. Respondetur id causæ est quia difficilius est iudicare differentiam animalium inter se vel hominum quam deprehendere hoc esse corpus. Facilius est cognoscere totum quam partem. Modo superius est quoddam totum sed hic prius habentur notitiæ singulares vagæ quæ conflantur ex pronomine demonstrativo et termino communi vel istud aggregatum supplet vicem termini singularis nondum impositi.

²¹⁹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{rb}]. Sed tunc dicis cum universalia sint nobis notiora sequeretur quod metaphysica esset prior aliis scientiis via doctrinæ cum ipsa sit de universalissimis.

grasp.”²²⁰ They are difficult and interesting issues because they are not immediately available to human cognition. Indeed, though not mentioned in this context, our knowledge of God and separated intelligences such as angels, is by analogy through their accomplishments.

The exchange over the cognition of objects at a distance, and the debate over the priority of singular notions with particular reference to the cognition of objects at a distance, continues when Mair is challenged to explain why, given that there are two individuals approaching at equal distances from the observer and only one of them, namely “a”, is known to the observer while the other is completely unknown to the observer both in appearance and by name, the observer is no more certain about “a” than about the other.²²¹ According to the opponent there are already two notions of the same kind in relation to these objects and nevertheless one notion is sufficient to cause a judgment that one of the individuals is “a” while the other notion is not.²²² The objection appears to be claiming that in virtue of my prior awareness and hence notion of “a” I should be in a privileged position to judge that this individual is “a” and the other is not. This is simply not the case. Mair replies that the notion I have of Socrates is insufficient to cause the judgment that this thing, which I see at a distance, is called “a” but through that notion which I have understood from others or on my own I grasp that this thing is to be called in such a way. It is possible in the first instance to judge “This is

²²⁰ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{rb}]. Consequentia est nulla sed eius difficultas non provenit quia tractat universalia sed quia crebro descendit ad specialissima quidditative considerata. Tractat etiam de Deo et intelligentiis quæ sunt difficilis cognitionis.

²²¹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{rb}]. Sed dices. Si duo æqualiter appropinquantur quorum unum novi et eius nomen scilicet “a” alium non cognovi ante accessum nec sum certioratus de eius nomine.

²²² Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{rb}]. Iam habeo duas notitias eiusdem speciei de istis duobus obiectis et tamen una sufficit causare iudicium quod hoc est “a”, alia notitia non sufficit causare tale iudicium.

“a” and “This is “b”” granting that “b” signifies the other individual. This is similar to the way “Socrates” signifies “Socrates” in the nature things (i.e., in reality) before he is called “Socrates”. Mair provides the following syllogism to illustrate his claim: “I knew Socrates at a distance, as is obvious since I intuitively knew this thing at a distance. This thing is Socrates. Therefore, I knew Socrates at a distance. However, it is not possible by means of this notion to distinguish Socrates from Plato. It is otherwise when he is close to me.”²²³

It is also objected that the intellect does not know singularly but only universally since according to Aristotle the intellect is of the universal and the senses are of the singular. According to Averroes Aristotle had maintained such a position in Book 3 of the *De Anima* Comment 5²²⁴ and this is reported by Mair in this passage:

the material intellect is different from prime matter in this, that it is in potency to all intellections of universal forms. Prime matter, however, is in potency to all sensible forms. And it follows, moreover, that it is the cause of this intellect making distinctions and knowing. Prime matter neither distinguishes nor knows since it receives a wide range of forms, namely, individual forms. However, the intellect receives universal forms. Therefore, on the basis of this authority, it is obvious that the intellect does not receive an individual form from matter as matter does, since then it would neither distinguish nor know. On account of these authorities and others some deny that the intellect is able to

²²³ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{rb}]. Respondetur quod notitia quam habeo de “a” non causat tale iudicium iste vocatur “a” sed per hoc quod ego intellexi ab aliis vel a meipso sic vocari taliter apprehendo; sed habet duo iudicia de istis hoc est “a”, hoc est “b”; supposito quod “b” significet illam rem sicut Sortes prius est in rerum natura quam vocetur Sortes. Sortem a remotis cognovi, ut patet quia hanc rem a remotis cognovi intuitive, hæc res est Sortes; ergo Sortem a remotis cognovi sed per illam notitiam nesciebam discernere illum a Platone. Secus est quando est mihi vicinus.

²²⁴ Averroes. *In Aristotelis De Anima*, [pp. 387-413, n.b. p. 387]. Aristotle. *De Anima*, [Book III, Chapter 4 at 429^a21-24 and Book II, Chapter 5 at 417^b16].

know a singular thing except indirectly (*per lineam reflexam*).²²⁵

This position, whose main proponent is named as Thomas Aquinas, in the words of Mair, is “beyond reason”. Aquinas had thought that since the principle of individuation in material things is individualized matter, and that the intellect is of an immaterial nature, that it was not possible for the intellect to know material things directly. The intellect comes to understand something material by abstracting intelligible species from individualized matter. This abstracted intelligible species is the universal. Hence the intellect knows the universal directly and only indirectly, as if through a reflection, is it able to know the singular.²²⁶ Mair writes, as he does on a number of occasions that “when there are two subordinate powers whatsoever an inferior power is able to know the superior power is also able to know. Now, the power of sense is a power which is inferior to the intellect and sense knows a singular thing. Therefore the intellect is able to know a singular thing.”²²⁷ He broadens the scope of his statement in saying that this is not true only of subordinate powers such as the intellectual powers and the sensitive powers but also among powers that are not subordinate one to another other. For example, the power of hearing perceives sound

²²⁵ Mair. *In primum*. d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{rb}]. Item *Tertio De Anima Commento* 5: Intellectus materialis differt a materia prima in hoc quod iste est in potentia omnes intellectiones formarum universalium. Prima autem materia est in potentia omnes istæ formæ sensibiles. Et sequitur causa autem propter quam iste intellectus est distinguens et cognoscens. Prima autem materia neque distinguens nec cognoscens quia materia prima recipit formas diversas, scilicet, individuales. Intellectus autem recipit formas universales. Ergo, ex ista auctoritate, patet quod intellectus non recipit a materia formam individualement sicut materia facit quia tunc non esset distinguens neque cognoscens. [*in marg.*, Sanctus Thomas] Propter istas auctoritates et alias aliqui negant intellectum posse cognoscere singulare nisi per lineam reflexam.

²²⁶ Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiæ*, Prima Pars, q. 85 and q. 86.

²²⁷ Mair. *In primum*. d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{va}]. Quando enim sunt duæ potentiæ subordinatæ quicquid potest potentia inferior cognoscere potest potentia superior. Modo sensus est potentia inferior quam intellectus et sensus cognoscit singulare. Ergo intellectus.

and not colour and the converse, that sight perceives colour and not hearing, is also true. However, it is not right to claim that they know in the same way. In order to strengthen his position he appeals to the metaphysical nature of the mind.²²⁸ It will be recalled that on Mair's account the intellect and the will, as powers of the mind, are distinct only by way of reason. However, the claim that "The intellect is the will in every way" did not prevent Mair from also claiming that they are differentiated by reason on account of our perception of their different relations to various objects. It is clear that he understood that the powers of intellect and will were not related to one another as superior to inferior but were on equal footing. This having been granted it follows that there is no implication that the intellect has the ability to act volitively. The intellect is the power of understanding, the will a power of choice: the will wills, the intellect understands. Thus Mair's contention that the claim, "since if the will chooses something, the intellect does not choose, but understands",²²⁹ supports his position seems reasonable. In the same way that different powers of sense are able to relate to sense-objects in different ways, the powers of intellect and will are able to relate to thought-objects in different ways.

Singular intuitive notions precede universal notions since "the intellect remembers having had this or that act, therefore it first has a singular and intuitive notion of such an object."²³⁰ The intellect, on this account, knows intuitively that it has performed an act of understanding or an act of will. Moreover, Mair concedes that the intellect understands

²²⁸ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{va}]. Dixi subordinate secus est de non subordinatis. Auditus percipit sonum et non colorem, visus autem econverso. Non tamen oportet quod eodem modo, quia si voluntas aliquid vult, intellectus non vult illud, sed intellegit.

²²⁹ For the Latin see fn. 228.

²³⁰ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{va}]. Rursus intellectus recordatur se habuisse hunc actum vel illum actum. Ergo prius habuit notitiam singularem intuitivam talis obiecti.

both universal and singular things while the sense knows only singulars.²³¹ He thinks that this is sufficient to counter the claims of the authorities (e.g., Aquinas) who seem to say the opposite, maintaining as was shown above, that the intellect is able to know only the universal directly and the singular indirectly which is the true and proper object of the senses. Knowledge of the singular, according to Aquinas and many others, though possible for the intellect was thought to be mediated by the *species intelligibilis*.

How are universal notions formed? Mair gives this account: In the case of a coloured object there are three intuitive notions. One is an external sensation which depends upon the existence of the object as regards what it is and what it will become. However, the outer sense is not aware of its own operations. The second is an intuitive notion in the inner sense of fantasy or the common-sense. It is at this level of intuition that there is an awareness of having an intuitive notion. The third intuitive notion is an intellectual notion.²³² Thus, in seeing something white, or hearing a shrill cry the perceiver is not aware of these intuitive notions by means of the outer sense, such awareness begins only with fantasy whose function is to judge of present, sensible species and both to retain and to judge the species that are preserved in the absence of the object from which they emanated. Mair claims that this can be argued on the basis of someone who has sensitive notions of things previously sensed. In this instance two species are caused in the fantasy, a species of the known object and a species of the notion of the

²³¹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{va}]. Propterea conceditur quod intellectus intelligit universale et singulare, sensus solum singulare et hoc sufficit pro auctoritatibus quæ videntur sonare oppositum.

²³² Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{va}]. Bene presentato aliquo obiecto, puta colore, ibi sunt tres notitiæ intuitivæ: una est sensatio exterior dependens ab existentia obiecti, tam quoad esse quam quoad fieri; altera est notitia intuitiva in sensu interiori, phantasia vel sensu communi de eodem obiecto; tertia est intellectiva.

outer sense. The third kind of intuitive notion originates in the fantasy which sometimes forms a notion of a notion acquired by means of the outer sense, for example, when someone dreams that he was dreaming.²³³ The third notion, as in the case of someone sleeping, is an intellectual intuitive notion by means of which everything that is known by means of the outer and inner sense is known. It is with this intellectual intuitive notion that the intellect forms universal concepts.²³⁴ It might be objected that “there is nothing in the intellect unless it was first in the sense,” a proposition to which all late-medieval philosophers assented, but with one crucial qualification: “when someone has a notion of the intellect itself or of its act, for this is to be understood in relation to a sensible object”.²³⁵ The force of the qualification is as follows: Intellectual intuitive notions have objects. The objects of intellectual intuitive notions are the acts of will and acts of understanding and the way in which they relate to their objects.

The third argument, that is of interest in building an understanding of the relationship of singular notions to universal notions, is reported as claiming that since there are no universals which exist in the nature of things, it follows that there are no such things as universal or common concepts. This position was supported by suggesting that if it was indeed possible to form a universal concept of that which is not, then

²³³ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{va}]. Sed sensus exterior non cognoscit suas operationes ut visus videns albedinem non cognoscit illam visionem, nec auditus audiens sonum cognoscit illam notitiam auditivam. Ista phantasia cognoscit. Argumentum est de somniantem qui habet notitias sensitivas rerum ante sensatarum, sic in phantasia causantur duæ species: una obiecti cogniti, alia notitiæ sensus exterioris. Tertio phantasia interdum format notitiam suæ notitiæ quam habet de sensatione exteriori ut cum aliquis somniat se somniasse.

²³⁴ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{va}]. Tertia notitia est intellectiva intuitiva qua cognoscitur omne cognitum a sensu exteriori et interiori et cum hoc format conceptus universales.

²³⁵ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{va}]. Et si dicas nihil est in intellectu quin prius fuerit in sensu, hoc utrobique non habet verum. Patet. Quando quis habet notitiam ipsius intellectus vel actus eius hoc enim intelligitur de obiecto sensibili.

something white would cause a notion of black and Socrates would cause a notion of Plato.²³⁶ The thrust of the objection is that since it has been denied that there is any universal nature inherent in things *ad extra* it follows that universal concepts are pure fictions of the mind. And if this is the case there is nothing to prevent the imposition of universal terms on anything whatsoever. In addition the objector argues that since there is no basis to universal concepts there is absolutely nothing regulating the signification of terms. This simply will not do. Mair denies the inference because “one thing never causes a proper notion of another thing”.²³⁷ However, as he explains, “the intellect having a notion of one thing is able to apprehend that thing and compare with it other things that essentially agree with it.”²³⁸ The details of his account are as follows:

The intellect, having a notion of Socrates, considers Socrates ordered (*in ordine*) to other complete beings (*supposita*) having likeness in matter and likeness in form, and abstracts essential similarities from these and abstracts one concept in which these individuals agree. When that concept agrees with things differing only numerically, it is said to be a most specific species. Sometimes the intellect considers one individual ordered to other things in respect of some property in which those individuals agree, as in having a body and a sensitive soul, and such a concept is a kind (*genus*), and so on. For, it does not seem that many complete beings are required to form a most specific concept. This is obvious in the case of the concept of God or an angel of God's, if several are not posited that are distinct in species. In the same way, for the formation of a

²³⁶ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{va}]. Tertio arguitur. Nihil est universale ad extra. Ergo nullus potest esse conceptus communis. Consequentia patet. Quia si posses fingere conceptum illius quod non est tunc albedo causabit notitiam nigredinis et Sortes causabit notitiam Platonis.

²³⁷ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{va}]. For the Latin text see fn. 239.

²³⁸ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{va}]. For the Latin text see fn. 239.

concept of a genus, a notion of all animals is not required.²³⁹

Some might object that it follows from this position that anyone having a notion of an individual is able to have, with the assistance of the intellect, a common notion of the *species specialissima*. Analogously, it follows from what has been said that one is able to form a concept of the genus of things based on two animals of distinct species. This is rejected by Mair as being contrary to that which has already been said.²⁴⁰ The objector explains:

Since a notion of Socrates and the intellect which are sufficient to have a specific notion are natural causes in relation to the notion which is to be produced they therefore produce that notion. And similarly, the notion of Socrates and of Brunellus produce with the assistance of the [cognitive] power a generic notion of animal. In the same way, this will be proved for the notion of all superior things.²⁴¹

²³⁹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{va-vb}]. Respondetur. Negando consequentiam. Numquam enim una res causat notitiam propriam alterius rei sed intellectus habens notitiam unius rei potest illam apprehendere ad alias secum essentialiter convenientes comparando ut habendo notitiam Sortis intellectus considerat Sortem in ordine ad alia supposita habentia similem materiam et similem formam et ab illa convenientia essentiali abstrahit unum conceptum in quo illa individua conveniunt. Et quando ille conceptus solum convenit rebus solo numero differentibus dicitur esse species specialissima. Nonnumquam intellectus considerat unum individuum in ordine ad aliqua alia considerans aliquam proprietatem in qua illa individua conveniunt, ut in habere corpus et animam sensitivam et talis conceptus est genus et ita in aliis. Non enim videtur quod requirantur multa supposita ad formationem conceptus specialissimi. Patet de conceptu Dei aut huius angeli, si non ponantur plures distincti specie. Quemadmodum ad formationem conceptus generis non requiritur notitia omnium animalium.

²⁴⁰ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{vb}]. Sed contra istud arguitur. [See fn. 239] Ex ea sequitur quod quilibet habens notitiam unius individui haberet notitiam communem saltem specialissimam. Pariforma quilibet habens notitiam duorum animalium specie distinctorum habebit notitiam genericam. Consequens est falsum, et contra dicta.

²⁴¹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{vb}]. Probo tamen consequentiam, quia notitiæ Sortis, et intellectus quæ sufficiunt ad notitiam specificam habendam sunt causæ naturales respectu illius notitiæ producendæ ergo produciunt illam notitiam. Et similiter notitia Sortis et Brunelli produciunt cum potentia notitiam genericam animalis. Eodem modo probabitur de notitia omnium superiorum.

Moreover, the interlocutor suggests, “if a notion of Socrates cooperates in producing a notion of Plato, then similarly it follows that a notion of Socrates could cooperate in producing a notion of a donkey. This, it seems, should not be said.”²⁴² Mair writes:

this is answered by denying that Socrates and intellect are sufficient causes for the production of a common notion. The attention, reflection, and consideration of the intellect or of the will to the application of these causes are also required, just as it was said above as regards the production of reflexive notions and as regards abstractive notions in the presence of many species.²⁴³ And it is conceded that a notion of one thing cooperates in the production of a notion of another thing, provided that, that notion represents the thing itself, as happens in the case of a common concept. It is therefore not necessary that a notion of Socrates produces a disparate notion, for example, an adequate notion of an ass. Nevertheless, it can indeed produce a generic notion [viz., a notion of the genus animal] which represents both an ass and Socrates.²⁴⁴

It is important to note that universal notions like singular notions are categorematic: they represent their objects directly. Therefore, universal notions cannot adequately signify something which is essentially different from or disparate from the concept they signify. In short, the adequate significatum of a universal notion is that which it is imposed to

²⁴² Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{vb}]. Præterea si notitia Sortis concurret ad productionem notitiæ Platonis, eodem modo concurret ad productionem notitiæ unius asini. Quod non videtur esse dicendum.

²⁴³ For some definitions of reflexive notions see fn. 82.

²⁴⁴ Mair. *In primum*, d. 3, q. 4; [fol. 36^{vb}]. Respondetur negando quod Sortes et intellectus sint causæ sufficientes ad productionem notitiæ communis. Requiritur enim advertentia et reflexio et consideratio intellectus vel voluntatis ad applicationem illarum causarum, sicut supra dictum est de productione reflexarum notitiarum et de notitia abstractiva in præsentia multarum specierum. Et conceditur quod notitia unius rei concurret ad productionem notitiæ alterius rei, dummodo illa notitia ipsammet rem repræsentet, sicut contingit de conceptu communi. Non propterea oportet quod notitia Sortis producat notitiam disparatam ut puta notitiam adæquatam asini. Bene tamen potest producere notitiam genericam quæ repræsentat asinum et Sortem.

signify. Hence a notion of Socrates cannot adequately signify Plato, nor can a notion of a donkey adequately signify a human being. But this does not mean that one or more notions cannot produce a generic notion, since two notions considered collectively may cause someone who attends to them to form a notion of the genus, as happens in the case of, say for example, the notion of Socrates and the notion of an animal.

The importance of this entire discussion cannot be overestimated. The main implication regards the acquisition of human knowledge. Knowledge is acquired through the particular which serves as the basis for our ability to know the universal. The universal is made up by the intellect drawing together the similarities of many singular notions. Universal notions thus acquired are based on these singular notions. The intellect attends to both the similarities and the differences of these notions. The voluntary imposition of the signification of a universal notion by the intellect though arbitrary is not random or undetermined. It is arbitrary since a myriad of terms can be imposed to signify any given concept, but it is not random because the voluntary imposition of the signification is grounded in the real similarities and the differences of notions. Universal notions are the basis for demonstrative knowledge and it is clear that it is their abstractedness from the particular that results in the kind of necessity required to take their place in system of demonstrative knowledge.

CHAPTER 5

APPREHENSIVE AND JUDICATIVE NOTIONS

INTRODUCTION

In the third question of the *Prologue* to the *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* Mair sets out to determine “Whether it is possible to have evident notions of theological truths?” Now, it has already been mentioned that an evident notion is characterized by the unhesitant assent that one gives to a truth having apprehended what the nature of that truth is. Thus, a judicative notion pre-supposes an apprehensive in relation to the proposition to which assent is given. In this chapter consideration will be given to the division between apprehensive and judicative notions.

APPREHENSIVE AND JUDICATIVE NOTIONS DEFINED

It was thought to be a matter of definition to establish that the division between apprehensive and judicative notions was both jointly exhaustive and mutually exclusive. John Mair writes

It is well known that there is an apprehensive notion which is in respect of incomplex things. An apprehensive notion is in relation to anything whatsoever which is capable of terminating an act of a cognitive power whether it is complex or incomplex. A judicative act, or adhesive act, is an act by which one assents to or dissents from a proposition truly or falsely and it is only in relation to the same complex.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.* q. 3; [fol. 7^{rb}]. Palam est quod est aliqua notitia apprehensiva quæ est respectu incomplexorum. Notitia apprehensiva est

Apprehensive notions have as their objects not only the complex, e.g., ultimate mental propositions and syllogisms, but also the incomplex, for example, the likenesses of objects. Lokert writes

An apprehensive notion is one by means of which something, somethings, or in some way is known complexly or incomplexly, judging in no way by means of it, for example, all natural likenesses of objects and ultimate mental propositions. But a judicative notion is that through which we judge in some way apprehending nothing by means of it.²⁴⁶

In brief, apprehensive notions may be had in relation to everything received by the intellective power. This is true of propositions and syllogisms because it is often the case that we apprehend propositions and syllogisms without either judging them to be true which is called an act of assent, or judging that they are false which is called an act of dissent. In contrast, judicative notions are exclusively in relation to the complex, e.g., propositions and syllogisms. Thus, apprehension and judgment are easily distinguished since judgments are always in relation

respectu cuiuscumque potentis terminare actum potentiae cognitivae sive sit complexum sive incomplexum. Actus iudicativus, aliter adhæsivus, est actus quo assentitur vel dissentitur propositioni vere vel false, et ille est solum respectu complexi propositionalis. See also Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. π 7^{vb}]. Duplex est notitia, quædam est apprehensiva quædam adhæsiva. Apprehensiva est respectu cuiuscumque quod potest terminare actum potentiae intellectivæ, sive sit complexum sive incomplexum quia non solum apprehendimus incomplexum sed propositiones, syllogismos, et huiusmodi universaliter omnia quæ recipiuntur a potentia intellectiva. Notitia adhæsiva vel iudicativa est notitia per quam assentitur vel dissentitur complexo, solum complexo assentimus quod verum arbitramur. Et sic in respectu complexi duplicem possumus habere actum, scilicet apprehensivum et adhæsivum, quia frequenter quis apprehendit propositionem nec ei assentiendo nec dissentiendo. Hoc patet de propositione neutra, ut astra sunt paria. Crab. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. b 6^{va}]. Et notitia intellectiva dividitur quia aliqua est apprehensiva alia vero iudicativa.

²⁴⁶ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. d 4^{rb}]. Notitia apprehensiva est illa qua mediante aliquid, aliqua, vel aliquid cognoscitur complexe vel incomplexo nullomodo iudicando mediante illa, ut omnes naturales similitudines rerum et propositiones mentales ultimatae. Sed notitia iudicativa est illa per quam iudicamus aliquid nihil apprehendendo mediante illa. For a more detailed discussion of Lokert's definition See Broadie. *Notion and Object*, [pp. 125-126].

to that which is complex and never in relation to the incomplex.²⁴⁷ Waim is brief in his exposition of the division between apprehensive and judicative notions stating that the term “apprehensive notion” is convertible with the term “notion”. A judicative notion is that by means of which we assent to or dissent from any proposition”.²⁴⁸ Waim continues that it follows “that every judicative notion is apprehensive.... Though not every apprehensive notion is a judicative notion”.²⁴⁹ It is even asserted that “any judicative notion is an apprehensive notion since every notion is apprehensive.”²⁵⁰ The motivations for making such claims will emerge as we explore the relationship between acts of apprehension and acts of judgment. At the present, it is sufficient to report these claim to draw attention to the fact that while all our late-medieval masters initially distinguish apprehensive and judicative notions in such a way that the division between the two kinds of notions is jointly exhaustive and mutually exclusive, they did not hesitate to explore and develop the kind of technical apparatus necessary to explain the inter-relatedness of these acts.

How apprehensive and judicative notions are to be distinguished in relation to the same proposition is a more complicated matter than how to distinguish between acts of apprehension in relation to the non-complex and judicative acts which are always of the complex. Given that there is an act of apprehension and an act of judgment in relation to the same proposition how is it possible, indeed, is it possible to

²⁴⁷ Crab. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. b 6^{va}]. Apprehensiva est tam complexi vel incomplexi. Iudicativa vero est solus complexi tanquam obiecti immediate.

²⁴⁸ Waim. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. g 4^{ra}]. Notitia apprehensiva convertitur cum ly notitia. Notitia iudicativa est mediante qua assentimus vel dissentimus alicui propositioni.

²⁴⁹ Waim. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. g 4^{ra}]. Ex istis sequitur quod omnis notitia iudicativa est apprehensiva... licet non omnis apprehensiva sit iudicativa.

²⁵⁰ Waim. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. g 4^{vb}]. Hoc non obstante [sc., that judicative notions presuppose apprehensive notions] quælibet notitia iudicativa est apprehensiva postquam omnis notitia est notitia apprehensiva.

distinguish between the apprehension and the judgment of the proposition.²⁵¹ Despite this perceived difficulty the members of the circle of John Mair were unreserved in their claims that the two acts were to be distinguished. For instance, Mair writes “that there is some apprehensive notion in relation to the proposition which is distinct from the judicative (*adhæsiva*) notion of the same proposition.”²⁵² This is obvious since it is possible to encounter a proposition without apprehending the meaning of its constituents terms. In the absence of this apprehension the agent is not able to assent to the proposition. Hence, it follows that apprehensive and judicative notions are separable from each other in relation to the same proposition. Moreover, when one begins to assent to that proposition it does not seem that the prior apprehensive notion is destroyed since there is no opposition between the apprehensive and judicative notions.²⁵³ In the case of self-evident propositions there was speculation over whether apprehensive and judicative notions were really distinct. Here again no one denied that the acts were distinguishable. Though one assents to self-evident propositions as soon as they are encountered there are nevertheless two notions, first the apprehensive and then the judicative, ordered to each other by a priority of generation. There is no reason to maintain that they are not separable in this instance since it has already been shown that judgment presupposes the apprehension. Mair writes that this is obvious:

²⁵¹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 7^{ra}]. Sed an apprehensivus et adhæsivus respectu eiusdem complexi distinguantur est maior difficultas.

²⁵² Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 7^{ra}]. Et dicitur in primis, quod est aliqua notitia apprehensiva respectu complexi distincta ab adhæsiva eiusdem.

²⁵³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 7^{ra}]. Quod patet quia oblata mihi una propositione neutra eam apprehendo, et tamen ei non assentio, ergo una istarum notitiarum est ab alia separabilis respectu eiusdem, et quando incipio illi propositioni assentire non videtur quod prior apprehensiva corrumpatur cum nulla sit repugnantia inter illas notitias; ergo simul manent. Ex quo apparet quod apprehensiva et adhæsiva respectu propositionis per se notæ distinguuntur.

No disposition inclines to acts of a different disposition unless by means of an act proper to the disposition to which it first inclines, just as a disposition towards the premises (*principii*) does not incline toward an act of knowing the conclusion, unless it first inclines to an act regarding the premises. But the apprehensive disposition inclines towards the judicative act; therefore, at first, it inclines towards an appropriate apprehensive act.²⁵⁴

The complexity of the discussion is highlighted when Mair, having shown that there are two notions, one apprehensive and the other judicative, in relation to the same proposition asks: Whether the judicative notion is itself apprehensive?²⁵⁵ It is said that they are. Thus, it would not be objectionable to claim, like Waim, that every judicative notion is apprehensive

since otherwise someone would be able to assent to some proposition, for example, “All rhubarb purges cholera”, not having apprehended it, which does not seem possible, since if I assent to it, I apprehend it and my intellect is carried towards such an object. Therefore, it [i.e., the intellect] apprehends it.²⁵⁶

It is interesting that in light of this Mair writes :

²⁵⁴ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 7^{va}]. Patet. Nullus habitus inclinatur ad actus alterius habitus nisi mediante actu proprio ad quem primo inclinatur, sicut habitus principii non inclinatur in actum sciendæ conclusionis nisi prius inclinet in actum circa principia. Sed habitus apprehensivus inclinatur ad actum iudicativum, ergo primo inclinatur ad actum proprium apprehensivum.

²⁵⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 7^{va}]. Et rursus hoc præsupposito quod respectu eiusdem complexi habentur duæ notitiæ quarum una est apprehensiva et alia iudicativa, dubium est an illa adhæsiva sit apprehensiva.

²⁵⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 7^{va}]. Et dicitur quod sic. Probatur quia alioquin aliquis possit alicui complexo assentire puta huic “omne reubarbarum est purgativum cholerae”, non apprehendo ipsum quod non videtur possibile quia si assentio illi, apprehendo illud, et intellectus meus fertur in tale obiectum. Ergo ipsum apprehendit. See also Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. π 7^{vb}]. Tunc dicitur quod omnis notitia adhæsiva est apprehensiva sed non contra. Patet prima pars, quia si sit aliqua notitia adhæsiva quæ realiter ab omni apprehensiva distinguitur Deus potest hanc notitiam adhæsivam in mente Sortis servare qualibet apprehensiva corrupta et sic aliquis assentit uni propositioni quam non apprehendit, quod est falsum.

It is sufficient that we maintain that every assent is an apprehensive notion and in relation to the same proposition there are two apprehensive notions distinct in kind, namely the pure-apprehensive and the apprehensive-judicative. The first can be separated from the second by means of the power of God, not however the second since the second [viz., the judicative notion] is identified with the second [viz., apprehensive-judicative notion] not only in reality but also through no connotation of terms is it called judicative unless it is also apprehensive. On what account they are distinct in kind is obvious since through one we judge that something is or is not, through the other we judge nothing. Therefore, they are different in kind.²⁵⁷

Though it is a difficult doctrine to accept, Mair is not averse to granting that pure-apprehensive and apprehensive-judicative notions are distinct from one another such that neither is part of the other. Thus it follows that by the absolute power of God it is possible to destroy the pure apprehensive notion while preserving the apprehensive-judicative act. Hence it would follow it would be possible to assent to the proposition “All rhubarb purges cholera” without knowing the signification of the constituent terms. This is only by means of the absolute power of God, since “it does not seem that according to nature one is able to assent to something unless he has a notion of the terms of the proposition to which he is assenting”. Mair explains the situation as follows:

The intellect now has notions of the things signified by the extremes of this “The wall is white” and the verbal act a, b, c and along with this the intellect has an apprehensive

²⁵⁷ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 7^{va}-v^b]. Satius d[i]cimus omnem assensum esse notitiam apprehensivam et respectu eiusdem complexi sunt duæ apprehensivæ specie distinctæ, scilicet apprehensiva pura et alia apprehensiva iudicativa. Prior potest separari a secunda de potentia Dei, non autem secunda quia secunda identificatur secundæ non modo in re, sed etiam per nullam terminorum connotationem dicitur adhæsiva quin etiam sit apprehensiva. Quare specie distinguantur patet, quia per unam iudicamus esse vel non esse, per aliam nullatenus iudicamus. Ergo specie differunt.

notion in relation to the whole; but the apprehension cannot be distinguished from the notions of the parts. Still, there is an apprehensive-adhesive notion. I concede, therefore, that God is able to preserve this [i.e., adhesive-apprehensive notion] in the mind of Socrates all the others, namely a, b, c, having been destroyed. And thus, by the absolute power of God, someone assents to a conclusion the signification of whose terms escapes him.²⁵⁸

Judicative acts, that is, acts of assent and dissent are those acts in virtue of which we assign a truth value to a proposition. In assenting to a proposition the truth of the proposition is affirmed and in dissenting from a proposition the truth of the proposition is denied. The nature of the relationship between acts of assent and dissent is an issue which has been the subject of much controversy in the history of philosophy. Specifically, the question taken up is: Whether an act of assent is dissent from the contradictory proposition? Mair first reports the issue as it was understood and developed by Gregory of Rimini who maintained that “since mental assent is an *enuntiatio*, dissent will be an *enuntiatio* of the contradictory *enuntiatio* (*opposita*) which also will be assent to its significate which is opposed to the significate of the remaining contradictory *enuntiatio*”.²⁵⁹ Hence, assent to “The diameter is

²⁵⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 7^{vb}]. Naturaliter non videtur quod quis possit assentire alicui propositioni quin ipse habeat notitiam terminorum propositionis cui assentit. Tamen de potentia Dei concedo quod quis assentit alicui propositioni et non cognoscit significationes terminorum simplicium, hoc est, habet nunc intellectus notitias rerum significatarum per extrema huius “paries est albus” et actum verbalem a. b. c. et cum hoc habet intellectus unam apprehensivam respectu totius, sed non constat an illa apprehensio distinguatur a notitiis partium, adhuc est adhæsiva apprehensiva. Concedo igitur quod hanc Deus potest conservare in mente Sortis aliis omnibus, scilicet a. b. c., corruptis. Et sic aliquis assentit uni conclusioni cuius significatio terminorum eum latet de potentia Dei absoluta.

²⁵⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 8^{rb}]. Dissensus non est aliquis actus intellectus a quolibet assensu distinctus quinimmo quilibet est assensus quidam quod probat quia cum assensus mentalis sit enuntiatio, dissensus erit enuntiatio sibi opposita quæ erit etiam assensus sui significati quod est oppositum significato reliquæ oppositæ. See Gregory of Rimini. *Gregorii Ariminensis OESA Lectura super primum et secundum sententiarum*. d. 3, q. 3; [Volume 1, 32] and Gabriel Nuchelmans. *Theories of the Proposition: Ancient and Medieval Conceptions of the Bearers of Truth and Falsity*,

symmetrical” is nothing other than the judgment by which “The diameter is symmetrical” is affirmed. Therefore, dissent is nothing other than the judgment by which the *enuntiatio* “The diameter is symmetrical” is denied.²⁶⁰ Hence, Mair continues, Gregory holds that “assent and dissent are nothing other than opposite assents, and any assent whatsoever can be called a dissent to the contradictory *enuntiatio* whose contradictory *enuntiatio* is an assent.”²⁶¹ In brief, Gregory denies that assent and dissent are really distinct acts of intellect. There is no need to delve into the complex history of the term *enuntiatio*. It is sufficient to state that it is defined by Gregory as “an *oratio* which is either true or false”; it is the equivalent of the term *propositio*. The response of Mair to Gregory is brief, but adequate. He rejects the position because he thinks that it is possible to assent to “Drinking good wine in moderation clarifies thick blood” without dissenting from its contradictory. Moreover, he thought that in the same way that it is possible for there to be both really distinct acts of nolition and volition in relation to the same object of the will it is also possible to have acts of assent and dissent that are really distinct in relation to the same proposition.²⁶² Mair maintains this position because it does not make sense that the assent to a proposition should imply that we are denying the contradictory. If assent and dissent are not really distinct, as

(Amsterdam/London: 1973); [pp. 227 - 237]. For a discussion of this in the context of John Mair and his colleagues see Broadie. *Notion and Object*, [pp. 140-143].

²⁶⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 8^{rb}]. Unde, sicut assensus quo assentit seu credit diametrum esse symmetrum, non est aliud quam iudicium quo affirmat diametrum esse symmetrum, sic dissensus oppositus non est aliud quam iudicium quo negatur diametrum esse symmetrum et ipse est sicut patet assensus sui significati, scilicet quod diameter non est symmeter.

²⁶¹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 8^{rb}]. Unde assensus et dissensus non sunt nisi assensus oppositi et quilibet assensus potest dici dissensus eius oppositus, cuius opposita enuntiatio est assensus.

²⁶² Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 8^{vb}]. Insuper sicut se habent volitio et nolitio circa obiectum voluntatis, sic assensus et dissensus circa obiectum complexum intellectus, sed sic est quod velle et nolle circa idem distinguuntur. Ergo assensus et dissensus circa idem.

Gregory maintains, then Mair would have to admit that the distinction is only a nominal one from which it follows that assent and dissent are logically inseparable. And clearly they are really distinct since it is possible to assent to the truth of a proposition without having the kind of knowledge required to dissent from that same proposition.

WHETHER THE PROPOSITION IS SAID TO BE THE JUDGMENT?²⁶³ —
THE CONCEPT OF EXTRINSIC DENOMINATION

The relationship of an act of judgment to the truth-value of a proposition prompted many interesting discussions attempting to reconcile the simple nature of a judicative act with the complex nature of the proposition. There was no hesitation to say that a judicative act can be called true or false, but there was a good deal of speculation concerning the nature of this truth value, since it was thought that a judgment cannot be true in the same way that a proposition can be true. George Lokert sees no reason why one should not grant that an act of assent signifies truly or falsely nor does he think it necessarily true that everything which signifies truly or falsely is a proposition.²⁶⁴ Waim thinks that the dispute over whether it is the act of assent that is called true or false or whether it is the proposition that is the appropriate bearer of a truth value is a terminological one; but even Waim thinks that, properly speaking, an assent is true by extrinsic denomination.²⁶⁵ Mair gives this account:

It will not do to say that a judgment is a proposition. For a judgment is called true not because it is a true proposition but because it is a judgment of something true. And so it is true by extrinsic denomination since the object of the assent

²⁶³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 8^{rb}]. An autem iudicium dicatur propositio.

²⁶⁴ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. e 8^{rb}-va]. Non video quin oportet concedere assensum vere vel false significare. Nec oportet omne illud quod vere vel false significat esse propositionem.

²⁶⁵ Waim. *Tractatus notitiarum*, [sig. h 5^{ra}]. Proprie enim assensus non est verus vel falsus postquam non est propositio. Sed disputatio est ad nomen.

is true, that is, the proposition and for that reason the assent is said to be true.²⁶⁶

In a similar way an act of dissenting from a false proposition can be called true.²⁶⁷ An act of assent is the affirmation of a true proposition, and an act of dissent is the denial of a false proposition. In both cases the judgment expresses a TRUE relationship to a proposition. It is taken for granted that assent and dissent are in these instances non-erroneous since error is either assent to a false proposition or dissent from a true proposition: they are erroneous since the judgments express a FALSE relationship to a proposition. A further complexity as regards the precise nature of the relationship between an act of assent and its object is introduced when Mair writes:

It is called a judgment because it is not sufficient to have a true object for the denomination of anything whatsoever in reality. This is obvious since the demonstrative pronoun indicating this “gradually and slowly one must abandon a bad habit of eating” is not called true and nevertheless it indicates a true proposition.²⁶⁸

This raises the question: Is the relationship of an act of assent to a true proposition the same as the relationship of the demonstrative pronoun to a true proposition? It is difficult to give an adequate account of what Mair has in mind, but the claim seems to be that a demonstrative pronoun, like judgment, is not an appropriate bearer of truth, despite the fact that it is appropriate to say “This is true”. A demonstrative pronoun

²⁶⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 8^{rb}-va]. Non est opus iudicium vocare propositionem. Iudicium enim vocatur verum, non quia sit propositio vera, sed quia est iudicium veri. Et sic est verum denominatione extrinseca quia obiectum assensus est vera puta propositio et propterea assensus dicitur verus.

²⁶⁷ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, [fol. 8^{va}]. Dissensus autem vocatur verus quia est circa propositionem falsam.

²⁶⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 8^{va}]. Dicitur autem iudicium quia non sufficit habere obiectum verum ad denominationem cuiuscumque in veritate. Patet quia pronomen demonstrativum demonstrans hanc, “paulatim et lente est recedendum a prava consuetudine comedendi”, non vocatur verum et tamen demonstrat propositionem veram.

is not called true or false in isolation, but is said to be true or false because it indicates a true or false proposition. Hence, the demonstrative pronoun “this” is true, only because it points to the true proposition “gradually and slowly one must abandon a bad habit of eating”. Mair, in another place, writes that formally, by extrinsic denomination, a practical notion is a complex judgment.²⁶⁹ Undoubtedly a practical notion is complex only in a derivative manner. The judicative act of itself is simple and it is only because a practical notion corresponds to a proposition that it can be said to be a complex.

CONCLUSION

The distinction between apprehensive and judicative notions is an important division in the theory of notions since it draws our attention to the fact that there is a difference between simply grasping the meaning of a proposition and affirming or denying the truth of a proposition. This is important because it is often the case that the meaning of a proposition is grasped without any judgment of its truth-value. The pilgrim, on the way toward the end, understands many propositions that pertain to theology, faith and so on. In fact, the pilgrim is able to understand more propositions than he is able to judge true or false. This helps clarify why it is important to preserve a distinction between the judicative act and the proposition since it is undoubtedly the case that the truth-value of propositions exist independently of the pilgrim ability’s to judge.

²⁶⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{rb}-va]. Notitia practica formaliter est iudicium complexum denominatione extrinseca enuncians qualiter vel per quæ aliquid est agendum.

CHAPTER 6

EVIDENT NOTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

INTRODUCTION— EVIDENT AND INEVIDENT NOTIONS DISTINGUISHED

A substantial amount of attention has been devoted to developing a comprehensive picture of the various kinds of cognitive acts that are present in the cognitive process. The main division, as we have just seen, is between apprehensive and judicative notions. In the case of judicative notions we saw that it is necessary to maintain that there is both an act of apprehension and an act of judgment in relation to the proposition. The intellect engaged in an act of judgment understands that proposition to be true or false and as a result the intellect either assents to or dissents from the proposition as signifying a true state of affairs. In respect of assent all of the members of the circle of John Mair distinguished between evident and inevident assent. This distinction is crucial to understanding the difference between knowledge in the strict sense of demonstrative knowledge (*scientia demonstrativa*) and other claims to knowledge such as belief (*fides*) and opinion (*opinio*). This is obvious in the following passage of Mair:

Of judicative notions (*notitiarum adhæsivarum*) some are hesitant and others not hesitant. If unhesitant this is two-fold: evident and inevident. If the second, then it is faith. Faith is a certain and inevident notion. If evident it is three-fold, either it is a notion of the premises and then it is of the intellect. Here “intellect” is not taken for the mind but more narrowly for the judicative notion of the premises. If it is a

notion of a demonstrable conclusion acquired through the understanding then it is scientific knowledge. If it is a judicative notion of the conclusion and of the premises then it is wisdom. If it is hesitant then it is mere opinion.²⁷⁰

There is a good deal of material in this passage that will repay attention, but in this section I limit the discussion to evident assent. In the next section I will discuss the nature of scientific knowledge. Once an analysis of evident assent has been completed a detailed discussion of inevident assent will be undertaken since it is best considered with a good understanding of the concept of evidentness in place. Before proceeding it is useful to follow Lokert's lead and point out that a discussion of evidentness and inevidentness presupposes that "a judicative notion is said to be true or false by extrinsic denomination, since it corresponds to a true or false proposition."²⁷¹ Having noted this, the starting point of our discussion is Mair's definition of evident assent (*assensus evidens*):

"Evident notion", also called *evidentia simpliciter*, is defined in this way: it is an assent which is true, unhesitant, caused by principles necessitating the intellect to which the intellect is not able to assent and in so assenting be deceived. "Assent" is posited as the genus since every evident notion is an assent and not vice versa. The remaining clauses posit the differences (*differentia*). "True assent" is said for an erroneous assent, howsoever firm is not evident as in the case of the gentiles' assent to this "God is not three persons". "Unhesitant" is said to exclude

²⁷⁰ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. π 8^{ra}]. Et notitiarum adhæsivarum vero quædam cum formidine et quædam sine formidine. Si sine formidine hoc est bifarium, vel cum evidentia, vel sine evidentia. Si secundum sic est fides, fides est notitia certa et inevidens. Si cum evidentia hoc trifarium, vel est notitia præmissarum, et sic est intellectus. Unde intellectus non capitur hic pro anima intellectiva sed crebrius pro præmissarum notitia adhæsiva. Si sit notitia conclusionis demonstrabilis acquisita per intellectum sic est scientia. Si sit notitia adhæsiva conclusionis et præmissarum sic est sapientia. Si cum formidine sic est opinatio.

²⁷¹ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. e 8^{va}]. ...notitia iudicativa dicitur vera vel falsa denominatione extrinseca quia respondet propositioni veræ vel falsæ.

suspicion, conjecture and opinion. For though some posit a distinction between these three, they are nevertheless convertible. The next clause excludes the assent of faith, which is generated by an act of will according to the first question of this [prologue]. The last clause excludes the “conditional evident” which is defined in the same way [as evident assent], except that the final clause is removed, or it is supplemented by the clause “granted the general influence of God” or “without a miracle”.²⁷²

The first of the differentiating characteristics mentioned by Mair is unproblematic. Evident assents, by definition, are always true. They cannot be false. Error writes Mair is “assent to the false or dissent from the true.”²⁷³ This definition is complemented by Lokert who defines error as an assent which is false, firm, naturally, and not freely, caused.²⁷⁴ The second differentiating feature, that an evident assent is characterized by unhesitance or certainty on the part of intellect, is necessary according to Mair to exclude suspicion, conjecture, and opinion. Opinion (*opinio*), as it was understood in medieval philosophy, refers to a judgment that is held only tentatively or hesitantly since the truth of the proposition to which it refers is, in a similar way, only probable. The claim that suspicion, conjecture, and opinion are convertible, and presumably not synonymous, relies on the fact that all

²⁷² Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 6^{va}]. Notitia evidens alias evidentia simpliciter dicta sic definitur: est assensus verus sine formidine a principiis intellectum necessitantibus causatus, quo non est possibile intellectum assentire et sic assentiendo decipi. Assensus ponitur loco generis cum omnis evidentia sit assensus et non contra. Reliquæ vero particulæ ponuntur loco differentiae. Dicitur verus assensus erroneus enim quantuncumque firmus non est evidens sicut est in gentili assensus huius Deus non est tres personæ. Sine formidine ad excludendam suppositionem, coniecturam, et opinionem, licet enim aliqui inter hæc tria ponant discrimen, tamen convertuntur. Proxima particula seiungit assensum fidei qui sponte generatur ex prima questione huius [sc., Quo modo possit viator acquirere fidem?]. Ultima particula removet evidentiam conditionatam, quæ eodem modo definitur hoc dempto, vel dicatur, stante influenza Dei generali, vel sine miraculo. Cf., fn. 278.

²⁷³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 14^{ra}]. Error est assensus falsi vel dissensus veri. For a discussion of faith and error see pp. 205-207.

²⁷⁴ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. f 5^{rb}]. Error est assensus firmus, falsus, et non libere dicto modo causatus.

of these kinds of assent refer to assents that lack the epistemic certitude ascribed to evident assent. They are not synonymous since, in a restricted sense, “suspicion”, “conjecture” and “opinion” connote different ways in which it possible to assent with hesitance to different propositions. Mair excludes an assent of faith from the category of evidentness in virtue of the fact that an assent of faith, though unhesitant, is not caused by principles necessitating the intellect. Faith, according to Mair, is not naturally caused but is “generated by an act of will” and is an assent, freely caused, to propositions that pertain to salvation. Lokert writes that the clause “caused by principles necessitating the intellect” is included to exclude faith and other inevident assents which are freely caused.²⁷⁵ In brief, a freely caused assent is nothing other than an assent which requires and depends upon the cooperation of the will for its certainty.

It is not the case that assent to any necessary proposition whatsoever is evident since some such assents are opinative and others are assents of faith. Moreover, “evident notion” and “necessary” are impertinent terms. Mair thought that “this is obvious through the definition of impertinent terms, for with either of these terms, (sc., evident assent and necessary) suppositing by means of a present tensed copula the other can be denied.”²⁷⁶ Neither term is opposed to the other nor does either term imply the other. Examples of impertinent terms

²⁷⁵ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [sig. e 8^{vb}]. Alia particula [sc., natus causari a causis necessitantibus ipsam potentiam cognitivam] excludit fidem quæ aliquo modo libere causatur et alios assensus inevidentes (si tales dentur) qui nec sunt erronei nec opinativi.

²⁷⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 6^{va}]. Ex ista propositione sequitur quod [see fn. 272] non cuiuslibet propositionis necessariæ assensus est evidentia cum alicuius sit opinio et alicuius fides. Notitia autem evidens et necessaria sunt termini impertinentes. Quod patet quia nec repugnant nec una infert aliam. Item patet per definitionem terminorum impertinentium nam quocumque illorum supponente mediante copula de præsentī alter potest de illo negari. For a discussion of impertinent terms see Broadie. *The Circle of John Mair*, [pp. 113-114].

include “purple, crawling” and “red, barking”. Hence, while an evident notion is of a true proposition, it does not follow that since one has an evident notion of a proposition, that proposition is necessary. Conversely, given that the proposition is necessary it does not follow that the assent is evident.

In respect of evident assents some are absolutely evident, some contingently, relatively or naturally evident.²⁷⁷ In the *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* an absolute evident assent is defined as an assent which is true, unhesitant, and naturally caused to which it is not possible for the intellect to assent and in so assenting be deceived.”²⁷⁸ It is obvious from the definition Mair gives in the *Prologue* to the *Commentary on the Sentences* that *evidentia simpliciter* is nothing other than absolute evident assent (*evidentia absoluta*) and it should be distinguished from an assent which is “evident in a certain respect” (*evidentia secundum quid*) i.e., relatively evident assent, or an assent which is “evident according to nature” (*evidentia naturalis*), or one which is “evident according to convention” (*evidentia conventionalis*). Mair writes that an “evident notion is really evidentness and assent. And it is defined as follows: An “evident notion” is a notion of some true complex fitted by nature to be caused mediately or immediately by notions of the incomplex.”²⁷⁹ Moreover, an absolute evident assent (*assensus evidentia absoluta*), sometimes referred to as *summa evidentia*

²⁷⁷ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. aa 5^{ra}]. Et notitiarum evidentium quædam est evidens evidentia summa sive absoluta sive simpliciter quædam evidens evidentia naturali vel conditionali vel secundum quid.

²⁷⁸ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. aa 5^{ra}]. Evidentia absoluta est assensus verus sine formidine naturaliter causatus quo non est possibile intellectum assentire, et in sic assentiendo decipi. Dicitur “sine formidine” ad opinionem reiiciendum. Dicitur “naturaliter causatus” ad excludendum fidem quæ libere producitur et non ex principiis intellectum cogentibus assentire. Dicitur “quo non est possibile intellectum in sic” etc. ad excludendam evidentiam naturalem. Cf., fn. 272.

²⁷⁹ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. aa 5^{ra}]. Ita quod notitia evidens realiter est evidentia et assensus et definitur sic. Evidentia est notitia alicuius veri complexi ex notitia terminorum incomplexorum mediate vel immediate nata causari.

is an assent to a truth whose extremes (i.e., the subject and predicate terms) do not supposit for God. This is obvious, writes Mair, since the mind assents to this “I exist” (*ego sum*) and in so assenting cannot be deceived.²⁸⁰ It was thought that it was not possible for one to assent to such a proposition and in so assenting to be deceived even by the absolute power of God. However, it must be remarked that it is possible for an absolute evident notion to become an inevident notion. Of course, this is possible only by means of the absolute power of God but, nevertheless, it is a possibility which Mair thought noteworthy because it makes the point that simply because an assent is absolutely evident to the individual who assents this does not mean that such an assent is absolutely evident to others. For instance, John Mair’s assent to the proposition “I exist” transferred to Lokert upon Mair’s demise would not be absolutely evident to George Lokert. The proposition “I exist” now inhering in Lokert’s intellect would continue to refer to its original significate, namely, John Mair.²⁸¹ Hence, the assent that Lokert could give in respect of the proposition which continues to refer to the existence of John Mair would be based on an abstract notion and hence could only be inevident.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 6^{va}]. Stat aliquem de multis veritatibus quarum extrema pro Deo non supponunt habere evidentiam absolutam. Patet quia anima assentit huic “ego sum” et in sic assentiendo non potest decipi.

²⁸¹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 6^{va}]. Evidentia summa erit notitia quando non erit evidentia summa. Patet. Capiendo assensum quem ego habeo de me et ponendo in Sorte me annihilando. Non valet autem quod dicit Aliacensis. Probabile est, inquit, quod si mea notitia poneretur a Deo in anima Platonis non esset ei notitia. Contra hoc argumentor. Anima Platonis est susceptiva illius quantum est de se, scilicet enim albedo naturaliter non migret de subiecto in subiectum, tamen Deus potest ponere albedinem papyri in pariete inhæsive et naturaliter repræsentabit idem obiectum quod ante repræsentabat illa notitia.

²⁸² Broadie. *Notion and Object*, [p. 156].

THE NATURE OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

The discussion of apprehensive and judicative notions was introduced in the context of answering the question “Whether it is possible for the pilgrim to have evident notions of theological truths?” Thus far, the discussion has been concerned only with explaining the meaning of the complex term “evident notion”. In this section attention will be given to the question: whether the pilgrim acquires knowledge of theological truth by means of discursive reasoning, in the hope of clarifying the concepts of knowledge and theological truth.

It has already been reported that knowledge in the strict sense concerns universal evident notions. Hence, it is not the case that the evident assent given to a contingently true proposition, for example, “This wall is white”, meets the conditions of universality and necessity required for knowledge in the strict sense²⁸³: while all knowledge is evident, not all that is evident is knowledge.²⁸⁴ This is obvious from the following definition of the term “knowledge” provided by Mair:

The first term [to be defined] is knowledge which is about a knowable proposition (*propositio scibilis*). A “knowable proposition” is a proposition which is necessary, dubitable, and fitted to become evident through the application of propositions which are necessary and evident through a discursive syllogism.²⁸⁵

The proposition is said to be dubitable in order to exclude self-evident propositions. Mair, reports the opening lines of Book II of Aristotle’s

²⁸³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 9^{va}]. Per primum terminum [viz., *propositio scibilis*] excluditur *propositio contingens*, ut *paries est albus*, quod licet mihi sit evidens, non tamen est *scibilis scientia proprie dicta* de qua loquitur Aristoteles 1 *Posteriorum* et 5 *Ethicorum*.

²⁸⁴ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. aa 5^{ra}-rb]. ...*omnis scientia est evidentia sed non e converso*.

²⁸⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 9^{va}]. *Primus terminus est scientia*, quæ est circa *propositionem scibilem*. *Propositio scibilis est propositio necessaria dubitabilis*, nata fieri evidens per *propositiones necessarias evidentes*, per *discursum syllogisticum ad ipsam applicatas*.

Posterior Analytics, as follows: “knowable questions are equal to those things that we truly know (*vere scimus*)”, and interprets it as meaning “every question is a knowable proposition and every knowable proposition is a question”.²⁸⁶ Thus, to have true knowledge is to have an understanding as Aristotle claims “of the fact [*quia est*], the reason why [*propter quid*], whether it is [*an est*], and what it is [*quid est*]”.²⁸⁷ The nature of the doubt is not that there is dubitability inherent in the act of understanding, rather, it is “sufficient that it [sc., the proposition] is fitted to be doubted by the intellect using reason having apprehended the signification of terms”.²⁸⁸ In support of this Mair quotes the following passage from Robert Grosseteste’s *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* where the first principles of science manifest the truth of knowable propositions²⁸⁹:

knowledge of first principles is not acquired through instruction, since we are not taught or acquire knowledge unless that which we first conceive is dubitable to us and appears false and after that doubting the truth is manifested to us.²⁹⁰

The final clause, sc., “fitted to become evident through the application of propositions which are necessary and evident through a discursive syllogism”, excludes principles which are known by means of the

²⁸⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 9^{va}]. Dicitur (dubitabilis) per hoc namque excluduntur propositiones per se notæ, qui non sunt scibiles. Istud patet Secundi *Posteriorum* Capitulo 1, ubi dicitur, quæstiones scibiles sunt æquales his quare vere scimus. Vult dicere philosophus quod omnis quæstio est scibilis propositio, et contra.

²⁸⁷ Aristotle. *Posterior Analytics*, [89^b23-24]. My insertions.

²⁸⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 9^{va}]. Non oportet quod dubitetur actu sed sufficit quod sit apta nata dubitari ab intellectu aliquo utente ratione, apprehensa significatione terminorum.

²⁸⁹ See Ockham. *Opera Theologica. Scriptum in librum primum sententiarum, Prologus et Distinctio Prima (Ordinatio)*; [p. 77 lines 3 to 10]. The reference to Grosseteste is: Robertus Grossetesta. *In Aristotelem Analytica Posteriora*, I, t. 1.

²⁹⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 9^{va}]. ...“scientia principiorum non est acquisita per doctrinam, quia non docemur vel addiscimus nisi illud quod cum primo concipimus est nobis dubium, et apparet falsum, et post dubitationem manifestatur nobis veritas.”

senses, memory, and experience, for example, “all heat produces warmth”; propositions of this nature cannot be demonstrated by means of syllogistic reasoning.²⁹¹ Principles known by way of the senses, memory, and the experience do not constitute knowledge. “Knowledge”, as understood by medieval philosophers, could not be established on generalizations in respect of matters of fact. Mair concludes with a second definition: “Knowledge is an evident notion which is of the true and the necessary, caused by the application of premises to it through syllogistic discourse (*per discursum syllogisticum*).”²⁹² It is not difficult for someone to whom the subject of discussion is familiar to suspect that Mair is simply adopting the definitions of knowledge that would have been current in his day. If one is inclined to accept the claim that Mair is the paradigm representative of Parisian nominalism then one might reasonably expect to encounter a discussion of “knowledge” which appears to have been largely adopted from the *Prologue* of William of Ockham’s *Commentary on the Sentences*.²⁹³ However, it should be obvious that there is ample evidence that such a claim is not, strictly speaking, indicative of the independent thinking in which Mair was engaged. For having reported these definitions of “knowledge” he indicates that some thinkers, namely Ockham and Pierre D’Ailly, would put the second definition in slightly different terms. In place of the expression “caused by” (*causata*)

²⁹¹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 9^{va}]. Ultima particula excludit quædam principia quæ cognoscuntur per viam sensus, memoriæ et experimenti, ut omnis calor est calefactivus, quæ non est demonstrabilis per præmissas ad eam applicatas, sed bene per viam sensus. Ipsa autem est dubitabilis. Nam si quis experimento non cognovit calorem calefacere, non magis assentiet illi quam isti: albedo est albefactiva.

²⁹² Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 9^{va}]. Scientia, igitur, est notitia evidens veri, necessarii, causata per premissas applicatas ad ipsam per discursum syllogisticum. The same definition appears in Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. aa 5^{ra}].

²⁹³ Compare Mair’s discussion with Ockham. *Scriptum in Librum Primum Sententiarum Prologus et Distinctio Prima (Ordinatio)*, prol. q. 2, art. 1 & art. 2; [p. 76 line 13 to p. 96 line 17; n.b. p. 76 lines 13 to p. 78 line 13].

Ockham and D'Ailly used the expression "fitted to be caused by" (*nata causari*) as a result the definition: "Therefore, I say that, knowledge is an evident notion which is of the true and the necessary, fitted to be caused (*nata causari*) by the application of premises to it through syllogistic discourse"²⁹⁴ requires a different interpretation. According to Mair, it follows from this definition that either experience or demonstration can generate evident notions of the same species. This runs counter to Aristotle since, on Ockham's account, knowledge of the reason why (*scientia propter quid*) and knowledge of the fact (*scientia quia*) can be had in relation to the same object and are of the same species.²⁹⁵ Mair gives the following definitions of *scientia propter quid* and *scientia quia*:

"Knowledge of the reason why" is an assent to a conclusion generated through premises implying the cause why it is the way that is signified by the conclusion. "Knowledge of the fact" is an assent acquired by proceeding from effect to cause, or from a remote cause to effect. For demonstration it is sufficient that the premises are more known than the conclusion and necessarily imply the conclusion.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ Ockham. *Scriptum in Librum Primum Sententiarum Ordinatio, Prologus et Distinctio Prima*. prol. q. 2, art. 2; [p. 87 line 20 to p. 88 line 2]. Petrus de Alliaco. *Quæstiones magistri Petri de alliaco Cardinalis camarecensis super primum, tertium, et quartum Sententiarum*, (Paris, 1499); [fols. 50^{vb}-51^{ra}]. Tertio declarandum est. Quid sit notitia proprie scientifica vel scientia proprie dicta. Unde dico quod est notitia evidens veri necesarii nata causari per præmissas applicatas ad ipsam per discursum syllogisticum... Dico autem "nata causari" quia non oportet quod de facto causetur per tales præmissas, nam potest per experientiam causari. Potest enim aliquis sine syllogismo evidenter scire quod luna est eclipsabilis per solam experientiam sine syllogismo.

²⁹⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 9^{va}-^{vb}]. Aliqui dicunt "nata causari" quia secundum eos notitia eiusdem speciei potest causari per experientiam et per demonstrationem... Contra hoc arguitur tunc scientia propter quid et quia de eodem obiecto essent eiusdem speciei, contra Aristotelem 1 *Posteriorum* [78^b22-30].

²⁹⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 10^{vb}]. Dico quod scientia propter quid est assensus conclusionis genitus per premissas importantes causam quare ita sit sicut significatur per conclusionem. Scientia quia est assensus acquisitus procedendo ab effectu ad causam, vel a causa remota ad effectum. Ad demonstrationem etiam sufficit quod premissæ sint notiores conclusionem, et necessario inferentes conclusionem.

The distinction between *scientia quia est* and *scientia propter quid* is more clearly defined by Mair in the *Posteriora* where he explicitly identifies Ockham as his opponent on this issue. He writes:

“Knowledge of the fact” is assent to a conclusion inclining toward assent to the conclusion, and it does not give the reason why it is thus. “Knowledge of the reason why” is assent to a conclusion generated through premises implying the cause, from which it follows that the same demonstration or understanding inclines immediately to two knowledges distinct in kind.²⁹⁷

The claim that knowledge of the reason why and knowledge of the fact are distinct kinds of knowledge rests on an analogy. As we have seen, Mair thought that there were specific differences between various kinds of notions; for instance, intuitive and abstractive notions are different in kind since in virtue of an intuitive notion one is able to have an evident judgment of the existence of something which is not possible in virtue of an abstractive notion.²⁹⁸ “In the same way”, according to Mair, “knowledge of the reason why inclines to something more clear and certain than knowledge of the fact does.”²⁹⁹

DEMONSTRATION AND THE GENERATION OF KNOWLEDGE

While it is by now clear that knowledge is generated through demonstration we have yet to discuss the mechanics of the demonstrative syllogism which generates the assent to a scientific conclusion. There are three “requisite causes” in the production of an

²⁹⁷ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. bb 8^{vb}]. *Scientia quia est*, est assensus conclusionis inclinans ad assentiendum conclusioni, et non dat causam quare ita est. *Scientia propter quid* est assensus conclusionis genitus per præmissas causam importantes ex illo sequitur quod eadem demonstratio vel intellectus immediate inclinat ad duas scientias specie distinctas.

²⁹⁸ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. cc 1^{ra}]. Sed variis modis arguimus distinctionem specificam. Notitia intuitiva causat iudicium evidens de existentia obiecti notitiæ intuitivæ, abstractiva quantumcumque intenditur hoc non potest; ergo distinguuntur specie.

²⁹⁹ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. cc 1^{ra}]. Eodem modo scientia quid est inclinat ad aliquod clarius et certius quam scientia quia est.

assent to a scientific conclusion. First, there must be assent to the major premise. Second, there must be assent to the minor premise. Third assent to the valid inference is required.³⁰⁰ These three causes are necessary conditions for the existence of scientific knowledge. It is clear that howsoever intense the assent to the major or minor premise, or howsoever intense assent to the valid inference may be in isolation, not one of the assents in-itself is sufficient to permit a scientific conclusion. It was thought that the whole effect of a demonstration is not generated in an instant, rather, the intensity of a scientific assent was produced by the intensity of its constituent assents. Hence, if assent to “b” (i.e., assent to the minor premise) and “c” (i.e., assent to the valid inference) were left unchanged, but the intensity with which assent was given to “a” (i.e., the major premise) was increased, then, the intensity with which an assent to the conclusion of the demonstrative syllogism was given to would be increased.³⁰¹ This is, Mair writes,

because “b” [i.e., assent to the minor premise] and “c” [i.e., assent to the valid inference] are two uniform and natural causes, and “a” has been increased, therefore the effect will be greater. And though there is no subordination in these judgments, as there is between the object and the intellect in the production of an intuitive notion, nevertheless there is more cooperation of the intellect uniformly cooperating

³⁰⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 10^{ra}]. Sunt autem tres causæ requisitæ ad productionem notitiæ scientificæ conclusionis, scilicet assensus maioris, minoris, et bonitatis consequentiæ.

³⁰¹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 10^{ra}]. Loquor de iudiciis, præmittendo notitiam apprehensivam terminorum. Nam una illarum causarum puta “a” assensus maioris non potest producere assensum conclusionis scientificum quantumcumque intenduntur per idem, nec “b” assensus minoris ad hoc sufficit, nec “c” assensus bonitatis consequentiæ, sed positis tribus iudiciis, quorum quodlibet est intensum ut duo generabitur scientia alicuius intensionis gradualis, puta ut duo vel citra. Apparet autem quod si “b” et “c” maneant in eadem intensione graduale, adhuc aucta “a” notitia maioris ad tria, assensus conclusionis erit intensior.

with the object or the opposite, [and this] reveals (*arguit*) a greater notion.³⁰²

It is interesting that the assent to the valid inference though held with greater intensity in relation to the assents given to the premises of the argument is not straightforwardly the sum of the intensity of each assent. This is obvious according to Mair. The first syllogism he describes is as follows: if a value of two is assigned both to the intensity of the assent to the major premise and to the assent to the minor premise, and the assent to valid inference is of the same intensity then the assent to the conclusion will be as intense. It also will have a value of two: “and though the assent to the conclusion is as intense as one of the premises, nevertheless the aggregate of the premises is more intense, and the assent to the premises is understood and is both more clear and the cause of the other.”³⁰³ Thus, the truth of the conclusion is contained in the premises. The claim that the relationship of the intensity of the assents to the premises and valid inference of a syllogism is proportional to the conclusion deserves some consideration, especially given that the second syllogism Mair provides to clarify this issue is not as helpful as one might wish. He asserts that in a syllogism where the assent to the major premise has a value of three, the assent to the minor premise has a value of one, and the assent to the valid inference has a value of two then the assent to the conclusion will have a value of two. The knowledge that results from the second syllogism has the same value as the first

³⁰² Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 10^{ra}]. Ratio est quia duæ causæ naturales “b” et “c” sunt uniformes et “a” augetur; ergo totus effectus erit maior. Et licet non sit subordinatio in istis iudiciis, sicut inter obiectum et intellectum in productione notitiæ intuitivæ, tamen maior concursus intellectus cum obiecto uniformiter concurrente vel contra, arguit maiorem notitiam.

³⁰³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 10^{ra}]. Si assensus maioris sit ut duo, minoris ut duo, bonitatis consequentiæ tot graduum, assensus conclusionis erit ut duo. Et licet assensus conclusionis sit ita intensus ut præmissæ unius, tamen aggregatum præmissarum est maius, et assensus præmissarum est intellectus et clarior et causa alterius.

syllogism. They both have a value of two. This is the case because “the causes are as active as they were before”.

There is a difficulty at this point in determining what is meant by the claim that the assents to the premises of the valid inference and to the conclusion are an aggregate of partial causes and not simply an addition of partial causes. I think that the proper way to understand this claim is to understand “the aggregate of partial causes” to mean the average of the partial causes which generate the assent to the conclusion. In both syllogisms Mair has provided the total value of the partial causes are the same: the intensity of the assents to the major premise, minor premise, and the valid inference have a total value of six. The assent to the conclusion of each syllogism is the same, they have a value of two. It is reasonable to maintain that since Mair contends there is no subordination among the different assents (i.e., partial causes) he is envisaging a mathematically determined average or mid-point. Now, it is clear that in order to have knowledge of the conclusion of a demonstrative syllogism one must assent to both the premises and to the valid inference. This raises the question of whether it is possible to have knowledge of the conclusion of a demonstrative syllogism without reproducing the entire syllogism. This is an important question since if such knowledge is not possible then it would be necessary to reproduce the demonstrative syllogism in order to be able to claim knowledge of the conclusion. This is absurd and a distinction was made between actual knowledge (*scientia actualis*) and dispositional knowledge (*scientia habitualis*).

ACTUAL AND DISPOSITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

In the same way that one ought to distinguish between actual and dispositional notions Mair thought that it was important to draw a

distinction between actual and dispositional knowledge. He gives the following account of the distinction:

It [sc., actual knowledge] is an act in respect of a conclusion acquired through demonstration and all that goes with it (*in toto suo ambitu*). It is able to be defined as follows. [Dispositional] knowledge is assent to a conclusion acquired through a distinction or distinctions.³⁰⁴

It was maintained that an act of understanding produces a concomitant disposition which cooperates in the production of another act of understanding which is of the same nature as the first act of understanding. Thus, an act of understanding “a” would produce a disposition “b” which would be a partial cause in producing another act of understanding “c”. In the same way, “a” and “c” produce a new disposition “d” in such a way that “b” and “d” constitute a single dispositional quality. The same can be said for other occurrences.³⁰⁵ Dispositions are only partial causes in the production of acts. Mair writes

From which it follows that that act [of understanding] is never produced by a disposition which it produced or vice versa, but the whole disposition is produced by the whole act, but the whole act is not produced by the total disposition. The first part of the act is produced by the intellect and by an actual notion of the premises and again

³⁰⁴ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. aa 5^{va}]. Sed scientia actualis potest sic definiri. Est actus conclusionis per demonstrationem acquisitus in toto suo ambitu. Potest sic definiri. Scientia est assensus conclusionis per distinctionem vel distinctiones acquisitus.

³⁰⁵ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. aa 5^{vb}]. Primus actus intensus producit habitum. Sit primus actus “a” et habitus “b” iterum “b” habitus producit partialem actum eiusdem speciei cum “a” puta “c” et cum “a” producit unum actum totalem, et sic “a” et “c” constituunt unam formam. Rursus “a” et “c” producunt habitum de novo, scilicet “d”. Modo “d” et “b” constituunt qualitatem habitualement, et sic consequenter.

an actual notion of them [viz., the premises] with a disposition co-produce a second act.³⁰⁶

There is no infinite regress since, according to Mair, the first act of understanding, by its very nature, produces a disposition. Once a conclusion of a syllogism has been demonstrated by the intellect, the intellect through a disposition spontaneously generated by the first act of understanding, readily assents to the truth of the conclusion. There is no need for a re-application of the premises to know the truth of the conclusion. If this were not the case it would be virtually impossible to make any claims to knowledge in the strict sense. Since knowledge in the strict sense is acquired through discursive reasoning there is some need to consider whether an assent of dispositional knowledge is evident in the same way that actual knowledge is evident. This has serious implications. If the assent produced through a disposition is not evident then it is not knowledge. The assent to a knowable proposition, on this account, would need be an assent of faith. It is obvious from what has been said that actual scientific notions produce dispositional scientific notions but it was thought that where the notions of the former were evident the latter were not. Knowledge in the strict sense requires the application of premises. Mair puts the matter in this way:

If I had actual knowledge concerning one conclusion which produced a disposition, and I forget the actual knowledge along with an actual notion of the premises, I will assent to that conclusion with only as much certainty as before I remember that at one time I knew that. And when that assent is certain and inevident it will be faith, it will not be knowledge nor opinion since I do not doubt [that conclusion]. And so on for other veridical dispositions.

³⁰⁶ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. aa 5^{vb}]. Ex quo [see fn. 305] liquet quod numquam actus ille producitur ab habitu quem produxit vel e diverso, sed totus habitus a toto actu producitur sed totus actus non producitur a toto habitu. Prior pars actus producitur ab intellectu et notitia actuali præmissarum et iterum notitia actualis earundem cum habitu conproducunt secundum actum.

Therefore [dispositional knowledge does not produce actual knowledge].³⁰⁷

It is possible to maintain that the reason that an actual scientific notion is capable of producing a notion that is of a different nature is similar to the ability of intuitive notions to cooperate in the production of abstractive notions that are different in kind. Thus, if it is asked what kind of assent occurs when the assent is produced by a disposition the answer is, it is an assent of faith.³⁰⁸ This is not the definitive account. Mair thought that there was a second position which he thought was not “improbable”, a position according to which the scientific disposition

inclines to a scientific assent that is of the same most specific species as the knowledge that produces the disposition. This is the case because any disposition produced by an act, or acts, inclines to the production of like acts entitatively of the same most specific species.³⁰⁹

Briefly stated, acts of knowing, whether they are produced immediately by the apprehension of and assent to the premises, the valid inference, and the conclusion of a discursive syllogism; or, whether they are produced through direct knowledge of the conclusion and dispositional knowledge of the premises, both produce evident assents to knowable propositions.

³⁰⁷ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. aa 6^{ra}-rb]. Si ego habui scientiam actualem de una conclusione quæ habitum produxit, et obliviscar scientiæ actualis cum actuali notitia præmissarum assentiam illi conclusioni tanta certitudine sicut antea memini quod interdum illam scivi, et cum ille assensus est certus et inevidens erit fides non erit scientia neque opinio quia non dubito, et sic de aliis habitibus veridicis. Igitur.

³⁰⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 10^{va}]. Potest quis dicere quod assensus sequens est alterius speciei a scientia actuali, sicut habitus notitiæ intuitivæ non inclinatur (ut constat) in notitiam intuitivam, sed in notitiam abstractivam alterius speciei sic potest dici in proposito. Si petas quis ergo assensus erit dicitur quod erit assensus fidei.

³⁰⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 10^{va}-vb]. Alio modo potest dici (et non improbabiler ut opinor) quod ille habitus inclinatur in assensum scientificum eiusdem speciei specialissimæ cum scientia productiva illius habitus. Ratio est quia quilibet habitus productus ab aliquo actu vel actibus inclinatur in similes actus in specie specialissima entitative.

THEOLOGICAL TRUTH

In order to clarify further what Mair understood by knowledge, I would like to conclude this chapter with some remarks concerning the nature of theological truth and whether it is possible for the pilgrim to have scientific knowledge of theological truth. According to the first of two definitions Mair gives for theological truth “a theological truth is a truth formed about God or a truth about creatures that leads back to God”.³¹⁰ There are several important implications that are drawn from this definition. First, “not all theological truths are believed by faith, but some are opinative, for example, God is able to do the infinite, or God alone produces blessedness.”³¹¹ Moreover, it follows that not all truths are strictly speaking theological since propositions such as “This triangle has three equal sides and three equal angles” are properly scientific knowledge. Moreover, in relation to some theological propositions there can be evident assents. Mair writes:

It is possible for the pilgrim to have an evident notion concerning many theological truths. This is obvious since philosophers can arrive at an evident notion of this, “God exists”, which is obvious from *Physics* 8 and *Metaphysics* 12. At least they were able to deduce somethings evidently about God or about creatures ordered to God.³¹²

However, there is another way in which theological truth can be understood. It is this second definition which is more relevant to determining whether it is possible for the pilgrim to have scientific

³¹⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 7^{ra}]. Veritas theologica est veritas de Deo formata vel de creatura ut habet reductionem ad Deum.

³¹¹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 7^{ra}]. Non omnes veritates theologicæ sunt fide credendæ, sed aliquæ sunt opinativæ, ut Deus potest facere infinitum, vel Deus producit se solo beatitudinem.

³¹² Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 7^{rb}]. Possibile est viatorem de multis propositionibus theologicis habere evidentem notitiam. Patet quia philosophi devenerunt ad notitiam evidentem istius, “Deus est”, ut patet 8 *Physicæ*, et 12 *Metaphysicæ*. Saltem evidenter aliqua deducere poterant de Deo vel de creaturis in ordinis ad Deum.

knowledge of theological truth. Theological truth in the second definition is taken

for the writings of holy scripture, either for an act or disposition of the mind in relation to such writings, both collectively and divisively, for one proposition, for one act or disposition or for several; just as logic in the strict sense is an assent to one logical conclusion or several, and sometimes it is understood for a logical proposition. Moreover, theology is understood for a disposition of those things which are derived from articles of faith and from the sayings of holy scripture just as conclusions are derived from principles.³¹³

The truths contained in holy scripture are the premises from which conclusions are inferred. On the basis of the above definition Mair infers several corollaries, but it is the last one which is important for our discussion. It is obvious, according to Mair,

that an assent of theological discourse is an assent of faith. For if one assents to some conclusion on account of the premises he believes precisely, such an assent will not be greater than the assent to the premises. Now the assent to the premises is faith. Therefore [the assent to the conclusion of a theological demonstration is faith]. I said “on account of the premises he believes” because it can often happen that the consequent is evident where the antecedent is inevident, but then the evidence of the conclusion comes from a source other than from the certitude of the premises. And it follows as a corollary that

³¹³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 4; [fol. 10^vb]. Alio modo capitur veritas theologica pro scriptura sacri canonis, seu pro actu, vel habitu mentis respectu talis scripturæ, et collective et divisive pro una propositione, uno actu, vel habitu, vel pro multis, sicut logica proprie est assensus conclusionis logicalis unius vel plurimum, et interdum capitur pro propositione logicali. Adhuc capitur theologia pro habitu eorum quæ deducuntur ex articulis fidei, et ex dictis sacræ scripturæ, sicut conclusiones ex principiis.

by no means is the assent to a conclusion in theological discourse knowledge.³¹⁴

The claim that a consequent can be evident where the antecedent is inevident seems absurd. In the first instant even the qualification, that the source of the evidence is other than the certitude of the premises, seems inadequate to dispel this apparent absurdity. It does not seem at all possible for an inevident conclusion to become evident, even if the source of this evidence is external to the premises. There is no specific resolution of this difficulty in the text. However it is plausible that Mair envisages that the conclusion becomes evident only by means of the absolute power of God which transforms the inevidence into evidence. This is consistent with the claim that the certitude that is required for evidence originates in something extraneous to the premises. This does not make the contemporary reader very comfortable but it is the most plausible explanation.

There is yet another issue that should concern the reader at this point. This is the claim that while on the one hand it is possible to have evident notions of theological truths such as “God exists”, on the other hand the assent to theological truth has been reduced to an assent of faith. This is striking and there is no ready manner in which to shed light on this difficulty. However, the suggestion appears to be this: if theological knowledge is considered as a body of theological truths then, while assent to some theological truths such as “God exists” are evident and thus are true scientific assents; this does not detract from the fact that theology, on the whole, is about clarifying the nature of faith. And

³¹⁴ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 3; [fol. 11^{ra}]. Patet quod assensus discursus thelogici est fides. Nam si quis assentiat alicui conclusioni propter præmissas creditas præcise, talis assensus non erit maior assensu præmissarum. Modo assensus præmissarum est fides. Igitur. Dixi propter præmissas creditas quia stat crebro quod consequens sit evidens ubi antecedens inevidens est. Sed tunc evidentia conclusionis aliunde venit quam a certitudine præmissarum. Et ex hoc corollarie sequitur quod nullatenus assensus conclusionis in discursu thelogico est scientia.

faith, in the words of Hugh of St. Cher, is nothing other than “the certitude of the mind about absent things, and is placed above opinion and below knowledge.”³¹⁵

³¹⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.* q. 1; [*fol.* 7^{rb}]. ...secundum Hugonem de Sacramentis liber 2, parte 10 capitulo 2 dicentem: fides est certitudo animi de rebus absentibus supra opinionem, et infra scientiam constituta.

CHAPTER 7

THE VIRTUE OF FAITH

SOME BASIC CONCEPTS

“How is the pilgrim able to acquire faith?”. The problem Mair confronts is a very modern one and it rests at the centre of our inquiry into the foundations of knowledge and the distinction between knowledge and belief: What do we mean by religious assent? Mair writes that belief can be understood in three ways. First, in its most universal employment, and then faith amounts to the same thing as “assent”. In this way, we “believe” the things we know and the things which we “opine”.³¹⁶ This broad sense of “belief” though acceptable for common parlance is inappropriate for philosophical investigation as it subsumes the categories of naturally caused and freely given assent. In a restricted sense belief is understood as “unhesitant assent to propositions whose truth is established only by the testimony of others.”³¹⁷ Mair does not elaborate on the importance of this definition as a model representing the acceptance of propositions based on trust. George Lokert, was quite clear that “faith” was not to be understood only as directed to propositions that pertained to salvation. He wrote that an assent of faith was not to be understood in the limited sense of religious

³¹⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{rb}]. Primo communissime et tunc tantum valet quantum assentire. Quomodo credimus illa quæ scimus et illa quæ opinamur.

³¹⁷ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{rb}]. Capitur stricte pro assentire sine formidine propositionibus de quarum veritate non constat nisi per testimonium aliorum.

faith, or more specifically, assent to articles of the Catholic faith but was to be understood to be any non-erroneous assent whose truth was not immediately evident whether it is true or false.³¹⁸ Lokert includes the clause “whether it is true or false” because, as we shall see below, the will can cause one to assent to a true or proposition and then it is considered to be positively affected (*pia affectata*) ; but the will can also cause one to give assent to a false proposition and then the will is said to be depraved (*prava affectata*). The third accepted employment of “faith” and the one to which Mair devotes his attention in the *Commentary* is “assenting without hesitation to propositions that pertain to salvation about which the master [sc., Lombard] says in Book 3, distinction 23 Chapter 2 : “faith is a virtue by which things unseen are believed. Nevertheless, it should be understood that it does not concern all things which are unseen but only those things to believe which, as Augustine says in the *Enchiridion*, pertains to religion.”³¹⁹ Some details are added when in the *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* Mair describes faith as “an assent which is true, unhesitant, and inevident”.³²⁰ These various elements are brought together in the following discussion:

An act of faith, or actual faith, is an actual judicative notion which is certain and inevident, of a truth pertaining to religion, accepted through revelation. Remove, the term “actual” and the definition of an act of faith and of a

³¹⁸ Lokert. *Scriptum in materia notitiarum*, [s ig. f 5^{ra}]. ...non capimus fidem pro assensu propositionis pertinentis ad salutem vel pro fide catholica præcise sed pro quolibet assensu firmo inevidente non erroneo sive sit verus vel falsus.

³¹⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{rb}]. Tertio modo accipitur proprie pro assentire sine formidine propositionibus quæ pertinent ad salutem. De quo dicit Magister libro 3, di. 23 cap. 2: Fides est virtus qua creduntur quæ non videntur. Quod tamen non de omnibus quæ non videntur accipiendum est sed de his tantum quæ credere, ut ait Augustinus in *Enchiridio*, ad religionem pertinet. Et in ista significantia utimur vocabulo. Augustine. *Enchiridion ad Laurentium de Fide et Spe et Caritate in Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina (Volume 46), ed. E. Evans, (Brepols, 1945); [p. 52].

³²⁰ Mair. *Posteriora*, [sig. π 8^{va}]. [Fides] capitur hic ut eius descriptio sit assensus verus firmus non evidens.

disposition of faith whether acquired or infused agrees. "Certain" is said to distinguish it from opinion. "Inevident" is said to exclude evident notions such as understanding, knowledge and wisdom. And this St. Paul to the Hebrews Chapter 11 implies saying "Faith is an argument of the non-apparent". "Of a truth pertaining to religion" because a firm and inevident assent to another proposition, such as, "Carthage is in Africa" is not faith as Augustine says in the *Enchiridion* Chapters 8 and 15: Hence, whatsoever things do not pertain to the attainment of happiness neither lead to it [sc., happiness], nor pertain to religion by means of which the highest God is worshipped on the way [to the end] so that in the end He will bless in heaven.³²¹

This definition clearly differentiates faith from knowledge which is described as an assent which is a true, unhesitant and evident caused by principles necessitating the intellect. I will have something more to say on these matters shortly but for the moment it is sufficient to have these drawn to one's attention before proceeding to Mair's exposition of how the virtue of faith is acquired.

Concerning the manner in which faith is generated there are various opinions. Some posit that the will of itself is able to produce every [act of] faith. Others [e.g., Holkot] think that faith can be produced by a means that takes the intellect captive. The third is the common [view] [e.g., Ockham and

³²¹ Mair. *In tertium*, q. 8, d. 23; [fol. 53^{va}]. Fides actus sive actualis, est notitia adhæsiva actualis certa et inevidens veritatis ad religionem pertinentis per revelationem acceptæ. Deme terminum actualis et definitio fidei actui et fidei habitui acquisitæ et infusæ conveniet. Dicitur "certa" ad opinionem separandum. Dicitur "inevidens" ad excludendas notitias evidentes quemadmodum sunt intellectus, scientia, et sapientia. Et hoc innuit *Apostolus ad Hebreos* 11 inquiens: Fides est argumentum non apparentium. Dicitur "veritatis ad religionem pertinentis" quia assensus firmus et inevidens alterius propositionis, ut pote istius, Carthago est in Africa, non est fides ut dicit Augustinus in *Enchiridio* capitulo 8 et capitulo 15: Unde quæcumque non pertinent ad felicitatem consequendam, neque ad illam conducunt, non pertinent ad religionem qua summus Deus colitur in via ut tandem beatificet in patria.

Gregory of Rimini] consists in the mean in which virtue is accustomed to reside (*Ethics* 2) .³²²

Mair describes the acquisition of faith as a virtue which consists in achieving the proper proportion between two extremes. The characterization of faith as a virtue implies that it is an excellence or a perfection of some kind. Mair is building on Aristotle's discussion in the *Nicomachean Ethics* where virtue is a rationally determined mid-point between two vices, one of excess and one of deficiency.³²³ In fact, Aristotle's application of the doctrine of the mean in describing virtue pertains to moral excellence. Here, the doctrine of the mean is being applied to describe what characterizes correct thinking in relation to faith. The virtue of faith is a state in which faith is neither exclusively naturally caused nor exclusively freely caused. An assent of faith is not simply the result of an act of the intellect nor is it solely the result of an act of will. It is not the former because a pre-condition for a virtuous act is that the action is voluntary. It is not only the product of will because then the will could prompt one to assent to something unknown which is absurd. The virtue of faith is achieved by the proper balancing of these two extremes. One extreme could be characterized as "blind faith" because it does not have sufficient knowledge to make faith reasonable. The other extreme would be to think that faith can be the result of an act of intellect alone.

³²² *In primum, prol., q. 1; [fol. 1^{rb}].* Sed circa modum quo fides generatur varia est opinandi ratio. Aliqui enim ponunt voluntatem posse se sola omnem fidem producere. Alii [*in marg.* Holkot] existimant fidem solum posse produci a medio captivante intellectum. Tertia est communis [*in marg.*, Ockham q. 25, 2 et Gregory *Prologus* q. 1, solutione ad quartum art. 4] in medio consistens in quo solet residere virtus 2 *Ethicorum* [1109^b31]. It has not been possible to locate the reference given for Ockham. For Gregory's position see: Gregory of Rimini. *Gregorii Ariminensis OESA Lectura super primum et secundum sententiarum*, [Volume 1, pp. 40-57].

³²³ Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, [1107^a 1-5].

There are two categories of virtue. There is virtue as an excellence of character, that is, as moral virtue; and as an excellence of thought or an intellectual virtue. Granting that faith is a virtue we must determine into which category it falls.³²⁴ One is tempted to conclude that faith is best described as an intellectual virtue, more specifically as a virtue similar to the Aristotelian virtue of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, which is nothing other than “a reasoned and true state to act with regard to human goods”.³²⁵ It is an excellence of thought which guides deliberation directed towards action and it may be characterized as a kind of “correct thinking” which guides all human *praxis*. This is not unreasonable and it may prove to be the proper way to understand the nature of faith as a virtue but such a judgment is rash at this juncture. Our course of inquiry is charted in the following propositions put forward by Mair in order to elucidate the concept of acquired faith in terms of Aristotle’s doctrine of the mean.

- (1) Demonstration does not produce faith. (2) A topical argument does not produce faith. (3) The intellect and infused faith are insufficient for the production of faith. (4) The will with its act is insufficient for the production of faith. (5) Acquired faith is produced by a motive and *pia affectio*.³²⁶

³²⁴ For a discussion of issues relevant to determining the epistemological status of faith see A. Kenny. *Faith and Reason*, (New York, 1983). Alvin Plantinga. “Reason and Belief in God” in *Faith and Rationality*, eds. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, (Notre Dame, 1983). Robert Merrihew Adams. *The Virtue of Faith and other Essays in Philosophical Theology*, (New York, 1987).

³²⁵ Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, [1140^b20-21].

³²⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{rb}-va]. Et pro responsione secundum hanc propositionem [viz., ...in medio consistens in quo solet residere virtus] ponuntur propositiones quæ sequuntur. Prima est. Demonstratio non producit fidem. Secunda propositio. Argumentum topicum non producit fidem. Tertia propositio. Intellectus et fides infusa non sufficiunt ad quamlibet fidem acquirendam. Quarta propositio. Voluntas cum suo actu non sufficiunt ad productionem fidei. Quinta propositio. Fides acquisita producitur a motivo et pia affectione.

This passage clearly illustrates the difficulty of determining in what way faith is to be understood as an excellence. It is not possible to acquire the virtue of faith by means of simple acts of intellect or acts of will: faith is neither exclusively naturally nor freely caused. Faith is not demonstrative knowledge which is both scientific and evident.³²⁷ Demonstrative knowledge is the result of a simple and firm intellectual apprehension and assent to the truth of a conclusion generated through a syllogism. Faith is not a naturally caused and hesitantly held assent which is the nature of the conclusion derived from the premises of a topical argument.³²⁸ The conclusion of a topical argument is an opinative assent and hence the technical medieval sense of the term "opinion" (*opinio*). A conclusion of a topical argument is nothing other than one based on a process of dialectical reasoning or sufficient authority. The intellect and infused faith by definition cannot be the basis for acquired faith since infused faith presupposes a special act of divine grace.³²⁹ The will and its acts are also insufficient to produce faith.³³⁰ This is obvious in light of the brief remarks we made earlier concerning the medieval dictum *nihil volitum nisi præcognitum*: the will

³²⁷ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{va}]. Prima propositio probatur sic. Demonstratio producit notitiam evidentem et scientificam quia ut dicitur *Primi Posteriorum* capitulo 2 Omnis demonstratio est syllogismus apodiction in faciens scire. Modo fides est inferior scientia inferioritate notitiæ.

³²⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{va}]. Secunda propositio probatur quia argumentum topicum solum producit opinionem et assensum formidolosum; ergo non producit fidem quod est assensus certus.

³²⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{va}]. Tertia probatur de multis parvulis Christianorum baptizatis et ablati per Mahumetanos et Tartaros qui venientes ad annos discretionis non possunt credere articulos fidei nostræ.

³³⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{va}]. Quarta probatur sic. Voluntas non potest imperare intellectui ut opinetur ad nutum sine motivo: ergo non potest imperare ei ut credat sine motivo. Antecedens patet: quia ut ait Philosophus 2 *De Anima textu commenti* 54. Imaginari possumus cum volumus opinari autem minime. Et confirmatur ratione. Ad oppositum propositionis sequitur quod voluntas potest facere intellectum assentire cuicumque propositioni sine motivo: et sic poterit facere assentire intellectum huic; astra sunt paria; vel huic; papa dormit. Consequens est contra experientiam quia hoc modo potest facere quod numquam mentiatur in prolacione propositionis neutræ cum possit facere intellectum assentire sine ratione probabili.

is not able to choose without its object already being known. Faith is generated by a motive (*motivum*) and a positive movement of the will (*pia affectio*) which prompts the intellect to give unhesitant and firm assent to a conclusion that was previously held only tentatively.³³¹ The motive (*motivum*) of an assent of faith is nothing other than the conclusion of a topical argument, in other words, a probable reason (*ratio probabilis*). The epistemic certitude attributed to an act of faith originates not in reason alone but also requires the involvement of will. The evidence of experience is insufficient to cause the intellect to give unhesitant assent to propositions or articles of faith. At best, the evidence before the intellect can prompt a weak and hesitant assent; only a positive movement of the will can transform this assent into one that is not simply true but also one that is held firmly and without hesitation.

It is fitting to follow the exposition of the issues as they were understood and developed in the *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* where Mair states that he is to explore the concept of faith according to ^{the} light of natural reason. He is describing the pilgrim's journey toward the acquisition of faith. It is an account which agrees with the ordinate power of God (*potentia Dei ordinata*) but not the absolute power of God (*potentia Dei absoluta*). Definitions are in order. The absolute power of God is the power in virtue of which God is able to accomplish anything short of a contradiction. The ordinate power of God is that which conforms to the laws of nature. The nominalist framework is omnipresent and it would be a mistake to construe these powers as being really distinct. *Potentia Dei ordinata* and *potentia Dei absoluta* are two names imposed to signify two modes of acting. While

³³¹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{va}]. Quinta propositio probatur. Nam fides acquisita producit aliquomodo et non videtur quo alio ergo verisimile est quod sic producat.

it is true that God can accomplish more according to *potentia absoluta* than he can according to *potentia ordinata* this, as Mair suggests, is analogous to a king being able to do more *de facto* than *de iure scripto*.³³² These concepts were of paramount importance to the medieval philosopher as they touched upon, and, even threatened the possibility of achieving epistemic certitude since it could be argued that God can deceive by means of His absolute power since this does not imply any contradiction in His nature. This view was opposed by many philosophers and theologians, including John Mair, who thought that the ability of God to deceive conflicted with His essence as the One, the Good and the True. It is important to note that the implication of the doctrine is not that there are two really distinct powers in God but that human beings have limited knowledge in respect of how God accomplishes his works. The distinction between the concepts of *potentia ordinata* and *absoluta* is an important tool in pointing out the fragility of human knowledge and the ability of human beings to grasp the sometimes mysterious nature of the universe. John Mair is not setting out to understand faith simply as a theologian. He is not investigating the nature of the mystery of faith *per se*. He is embarking upon this journey first and foremost as a philosopher who is attempting to provide an interpretation of the nature of acquired faith. He is giving an account of faith as it is acquired in this lifetime in virtue of the knowledge human beings have of the ordinary workings of God through his creation, i.e., nature. This is not to deny nor to minimize the impact

³³² Mair. *In primum*, d. 43, q. 1; [fol. 100^{rb}]. ...duplex est potentia Dei ordinata scilicet et absoluta. Potentia absoluta Dei se extendit ad illa quæ contradictionem non implicant... Alia est potentia Dei ordinata et est illa quæ est conformis legi ordinatæ quæ nobis constat per scripturam vel revelationem, non quod sint duæ potentiæ realiter distinctæ, sed quia Deus propter duplicem modum agendi quem habet vel habere potest duobus nominibus vocatur sicut dicimus quod multa potest rex de facto quæ non potest de iure scripto.

of the fact that the journey is a faithful one, rather, it is to emphasize the fact that acquired faith is essentially rational and grounded in experience.

THE PHENOMENON OF FAITH

Faith is acquired in virtue of both an act of intellect and an act of will. It is not a simple act of will but an act that involves a positive movement of the will to accept the evidence available to the intellect as sufficient grounds for belief. The account that Mair provides is as follows:

Pia affectio can be understood in two ways. One way is that which does not consider sophistic arguments in the opposite direction. For instance, you preach to someone that Christ is God and in testimony of this claim you say to a lame man: Rise and Walk. On hearing these words Socrates is able to consider sophistic arguments against this position by saying that this is by means of magic or some such thing and this is depraved (*prave affectatum*). In another way [it is possible to understand *pia affectio* as], excluding these sophistic arguments and without positing any act of will, and then an act of faith which will be a certain and inevident notion will be caused without any act of will since that miracle does not capture the intellect in the same way as a demonstration or an intuitive notion concerning a contingent judgment. This however would be to agree with Holkot.³³³

³³³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{va}]. ...*pia affectio* potest intelligi duobus modis. Uno modo quod quis non considerat sophismata in oppositum. Exempli causa: alicui predicas Christum esse Deum, et in attestationem illius dicis claudo, Surge et Ambula, tunc Sortes audiens potest considerare sophisticationes in oppositum dicendo quod hoc est per artem magicam vel aliquid tale: et hoc est *prave affectatum*. Altero modum excludendo istas sophisticationes nullum actum voluntatis ponendo, et tunc sine actu voluntatis causabitur actus fidei qui erit notitia certa et inevidens, quia illud miraculum non captivat intellectum sicut demonstratio vel notitia intuitiva de iudicio contingenti. Hoc est autem esset coincidere cum Holkot.

Robert Holkot, a late 13th century English Dominican friar, had maintained that faith was naturally caused without the cooperation of the will. He thought that “belief in articles of faith or any other proposition is not in the free power of man.”³³⁴ Belief in a proposition of any kind was the result of the intellect grasping a proposition and judging it to be true on account of the evidence. This is to align faith with opinion and knowledge which are both naturally caused. Mair and his contemporaries were critical of this difficult position. Their central objection was that a pre-condition for an assent to be considered virtuous or not is its voluntariness. Mair writes that “since God obliges us to believe and yet does not oblige us to do something which goes beyond our powers, we will be free to believe and not to believe.”³³⁵ He continues “moreover assent is a perfection of the will and therefore faith is in our power which does not seem to be true unless, for believing, the free action of the will were to cooperate”.³³⁶ Properly understood *pia affectio* is a positive movement of the will which prompts the intellect to assent unhesitantly to a proposition whose truth without such cooperation is doubtful. Mair explains that *pia affectio* supposits for an act of will, connoting that it wills that which agrees with religion and denies that which is opposed to it. Willing negatively (*nolle*) opposes the generation of faith and as a result positively willing (*velle*) cooperates in the generation of it.³³⁷ It is a positive movement of the

³³⁴ Robert Holkot. *Super Sententias*. (Lyons, 1501); [sig. a 2^{va}]. ...credere articulis fidei vel quamcumque propositionem non est in hominis libera potestate.

³³⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{vb}]. Rursus cum Deus obliget nos ad credendum et non obliget nos ad illud quod transcendit vires nostras liberum erit credere et non credere.

³³⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{vb}]. ...assentio autem est voluntatis perfectio ergo fides est in nostra potestate, quod non videtur esse verum nisi ad credendum concurreret actio libera voluntatis.

³³⁷ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{va-vb}]. Pia affectio enim supponit pro actu voluntatis connotando quod velit illud quod concernit religionem et nolit illud quod ei adversatur...Et sic nolle repugnat generationem fidei et per consequens velle ad generationem eiusdem concurrat.

will that prompts one to give unhesitant assent to that which just has occurred, i.e., the coincidence of the command "Get up and walk" and the act of walking on the part of a hitherto lame individual, is evidence of a miracle. In the absence of such a positive motivation of the will there is no act of belief. The sceptic, one suffering from *prava affectio* will claim that the available evidence suggests something else and is more likely to be the result of an act of magic or some such thing but nothing more. The evidence in both cases is the same and it affords a probable reason for either conclusion. Faith is not irrational but is firmly grounded in both an act of intellect and an act of will. The will is a partial cause of an assent of faith and it is not capable of impeding the effects of evident principles. However, the will must cooperate with the intellect which knows these principles if there is to be an act of belief. There is an interesting question which should be addressed: Is it possible to ascribe an act of faith exclusively to an act of will?

The response Mair gives is insightful: An act of will can be considered in two ways. In the first instance, it can be taken as the commanded act of will (*actus voluntatis imperatus*) which is nothing else than the act of believing itself. In the second instance it can be taken as the elicited act of will (*actus voluntatis elicitus*), that is, according to the act of will as the efficient cause of the act of belief. In the first sense an act of faith is an act of will but not in the second sense since the act of faith insofar as it is an elicited act inheres in the intellect and is an assent. The elicited act is located in the intellect because the will as an efficient cause of belief necessarily involves understanding. It is really an act of intellect and first and foremost inheres in the intellect.³³⁸ It is no doubt possible that Mair simply means that an act of

³³⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol.*; q. 1; [fol. 1^{vb}]. Respondetur distinguendo quod sit actus voluntatis, vel imperatus, et sic concedo, vel actus elicitus, sic nego; sed

faith primarily inheres in the intellect and secondarily inheres in the will. This is consistent with Mair's claim: "and if by means of the possible or the impossible it were to happen that the intellect was to be separated from the will the assent would inhere in the intellect and not in the will."³³⁹ Of course, another option would be to have located the act of assent in the will alone. But this cannot be admitted because an act of assent assumes knowledge. The will in-itself is simply impotent without knowledge of the object of belief, thus the necessity of the intellect in producing an assent of faith.

The will is able to effect the certainty of an assent. The hesitant nature of an opinion is moved to unhesitance in virtue of an act of will. In this way, an opinative act is transformed into an act of faith. It may be objected that from this it follows that in a similar way demonstration and will together produce a notion entitatively more perfect than scientific knowledge. It also follows from this principle that the will and apprehensive notions of first principles would produce a notion which is greater in perfection than a judicative notion of a first principle. In the same way it is probable that an intuitive notion of whiteness and an act of will would produce a more perfect intellection than the intuitive notion that would be produced by means of the intellect and the object.³⁴⁰ This, as Mair indicates, is to misunderstand the nature of

quia inhæret intellectui et est assensus, realiter est actus intellectus et ei primo inhæret.

³³⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{vb}]. Et si per possibile vel impossibile intellectus separaretur a voluntate, intellectui ille assensus inhæreret et non voluntati.

³⁴⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^{vb}]. Sed contra hoc arguitur [See fn. 339]. Ex illo sequitur quod demonstratio et voluntas producerent notitiam perfectiorem entitative quam sit scientia. Probatur sic. Per te argumentum topicum et voluntas producant notitiam perfectiorem opinione et argumentum topicum tam generaliter reddit opinionem quam argumentum demonstrativum generat scientiam. Et ex eodem principio probatur quod voluntas et notitiæ apprehensivæ primi principii producerent notitiam unam perfectiorem quam est notitia iudicativa primi principii. Eadem via probabitur quod notitia intuitiva

scientific demonstration which does not admit of degrees. Unlike an opinative assent which is hesitant, scientific knowledge is certain and evident: "It is caused by principles necessitating the intellect". Mair treads cautiously. He claims that if this position is accepted then it is very difficult to disprove and he judges that it is therefore more reasonable to reject the inference than to attack the premises. Mair must reject the inference and not the premises because to reject them would endanger his own position since his opponent's argument draws heavily on the combination of natural and free causation which Mair has used to explain the phenomenon of faith. Thus he writes: "Experience, in fact attests that when I look at the wall, from the fact that I bring to bear an effort of the will to a willing to look, I do not know thereby the whiteness any more clearly at the end than in the beginning."³⁴¹ The will is involved only insofar as it is responsible for having directed one's attention to the wall, the will does not cooperate in the cognitive process.

The role of *pia affectio* is essential in the production of an act of faith and it was the subject of a good deal of controversy. It was generally thought that *pia affectio* was able to prompt an assent greater than reason could prove. However some thought that this could cause someone to assent to an article of faith without any probable reason. Because of its possible implications the claim that the will could cause an assent to be held more firmly than reason could prove was handled with care. The following passage reports two of the possible implications of maintaining such a position:

albedinis et actus voluntatis producunt intellectionem perfectiorem quam esset notitia intuitiva producta ab intellectu et ab obiecto.

³⁴¹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 1^vb]. Si quis concederet illata difficile esset illum redarguere, sed rationabilius iudico in omnibus negare consequentiam. Experientia namque teste quando intueor parietem, per hoc quod ego appono conamen voluntatis ad velle intueri, non lymphidius cognosco albedinem in fine quam principio.

First it follows that if one is able to assent more to one neutral proposition, which reason proves, by means of a command of the will one is able to assent to a proposition without reason. For example, if the intellect is able to assent to this “God is Three and One” more firmly than reason proves, then one is able to assent to this “God is Three and One” without motive. Second, it then follows that *pia affectio* is a more powerful cause of an assent of faith than a topical argument is and a topical argument produces a hesitant assent without the aid of the will. Therefore *pia affectio*, which is an act of will, is able to produce an assent without the cooperation of a topical reason.³⁴²

In the first instance there is no hesitation on the part of Mair to accept the antecedent which states that the will is able to command assent to propositions that are not established simply on the basis of evidence. The inference, that the will can command assent to a proposition without reason, is rejected since, as was often asserted, the will is blind in its operations without the assistance of the intellect. In the second case it is conceded that the will is a more powerful cause than a topical argument in the production of an assent of faith. It is obvious that the conclusion of a topical argument, an assent which is naturally caused but hesitantly held, is properly said to be of the intellect. Despite the concession that the will is a more powerful cause than an intellect’s topical reason, it does not follow that either the intellect or the will alone is able to produce an assent of faith. The certainty attributed to an assent of faith or a proposition is a derivative of a conjunction of *pia affectio*

³⁴² Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 2^{ra}]. Tum primo. Si quis potest assentire plus uni propositioni neutræ quam ratio probat per imperium voluntatis potest assentire uni propositioni sine ratione ut si intellectus potest assentire huic: Deus est trinus et unus firmitus quam ratio probat; ergo sine motivo potest assentire huic, Deus est trinus et unus. Tum secundo. Pia affectio est potior causa assensus fidei quam ratio topica et ratio topica producit assensum formidolosum sine iuvamine voluntatis; ergo pia affectio quæ est actus voluntatis potest aliquem assensum producere sine concursu rationis topicæ.

and a motive or *ratio probabilis*. The conjunction of both of these is a necessary and sufficient condition for the certainty that is attributed to an assent of faith. *Pia affectio*, while it is necessary in the production of an act of faith, is not in-itself sufficient. In the same way, it is not the case that a topical argument is in-itself sufficient to cause an assent of faith. Mair thought that even an infinite number of topical arguments are not able to produce an assent of faith, nor are they able to produce an evident notion.³⁴³ He is emphatic: “Certitude is nothing other than assent by means of which I assent with certitude. Now that assent, as is obvious from what has been said above, is produced by means of *pia affectio* and a motive.”³⁴⁴

The precise nature of this positive motivation of the will and the role of reason is questioned in the following passage:

If the intellect has equal and opposed reasons, for example, four for proving “a is b” and just as many on the opposite side for proving the contradictory, the will is now able to assent to one part or the other and only *pia affectio* does this.... It is not correct to say that the intellect is more inclined to the true part, because let us suppose that as much as the intellect is inclined to the truth there is so much of a reason posited in opposition.³⁴⁵

In short, there are as many reasons for assenting to the true as there are for assenting to the false proposition. The result is that when it has a motive the intellect is just as likely to assent to the false as it is to assent

³⁴³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 2^{ra}]. Sed nego quod infinita argumenta topica possunt producere fidem vel notitiam evidentem.

³⁴⁴ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 2^{ra}]. Certitudo enim nihil aliud est quam assensus per quam certitudinaliter assentio. Modo ille ut patet ex dictis producitur a pia affectione et motivo.

³⁴⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 2^{rb}]. Si intellectus habeat rationes oppositas æquilibres quattuor ad probandum “a esse b” et totidem in oppositum contradictorium iam voluntas potest assentire uni parti, vel alteri, et sola pia affectio hoc facit... Non valet dicere quod intellectus magis inclinatur ad partem veram quia ponamus quod quantum intellectus inclinatur ad verum tantum ponatur rationis in oppositum.

to the true.³⁴⁶ Assent could be given either to the proposition or to its negation. Moreover, it might be suggested that given that there are equal reasons for assenting both to the negation and to the affirmation of the proposition, this implies that the assent is produced only by means of a positive movement of the will. Mair thinks that this situation is analogous to their being four grades of cold equally acting on and resisting four degrees of heat. If there had been six grades of heat then the action, i.e., a warming, would originate in the two additional grades.³⁴⁷ It is clear that one part of the reason is hindered from wholly producing its effect, nevertheless, the effect it produces will not be as intense, because the assent in that case would have been much more remiss than if there had not been opposed reasons. This is similar to the case where the balance of four equal and opposed degrees of cold and heat is altered in favour of the latter and a subsequent warming effect is produced.³⁴⁸ Against this Mair thought that if we assume that there are good reasons for assenting to either case, then it should probably be said that the aggregate of *pia affectio* together with the probable reasons produce the assent. And on the basis of the above Mair claims that “the greater the magnitude of an act of will the more intense will be the assent”.³⁴⁹ It should be noted that the description of the intensity of an

³⁴⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 2^{rb}]. Item intellectus assentit falso sicut vero quando habet motivum.

³⁴⁷ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 2^{rb}]. Sed contra hoc dicis. Quattuor rationes impediunt activitatem oppositarum sic ut nihil agant, et assensus ibi aliquis producitur, ergo a sola pia affectione, quemadmodum si quattuor gradus frigoris æqualiter agerent et resisterent cum quattuor gradibus caloris, si fuerint 6 gradus caloris actio a duobus gradibus proveniet.

³⁴⁸ The choice of analogies is an interesting one. It associates the late-medieval discussion of the intensity and remission of forms in respect of the qualities of physical objects with the intensity and remission of assent. For a discussion of the intensity and remission of forms see: Edith Sylla. “Medieval Concepts of the Latitude of Forms: The Oxford Calculators.” *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*. 40 (1973): 223-83 and Marshall Clagett. *The Science of Mechanics in the Middle Ages*, (London, 1959).

³⁴⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 2^{rb-va}]. Respondetur. Una pars rationum non impeditur a suo effectu totaliter bene tamen ne tam intensum effectum

assent as a function of the magnitude of the positive movement of the will is only true in respect of inevident and freely willed assents. It follows from what has been said that it is now possible to assent to “a is b” and now to dissent from the same proposition but it is not the case that such a transition is sudden. This is obvious according to Mair because an assent endures for some period of time.³⁵⁰ This is not a particularly satisfactory inference. However, the inference is defended on the grounds that through an effort of the will it is not necessary for a heretic to assent to something which is against faith, nor is it necessary that the heretic dissent from a proposition which pertains to faith. The heretic is blinded by the depravity of his will and does not acquiesce to the truth through reason.³⁵¹ It seems that as Mair understands the situation the assent given by the heretic endures because of the effort of the will and that such assents are by their nature erroneous. As a result the assents are not according to dictates of right reason. However, it is not necessary that the heretic assents to the false or dissents from the true, it is possible that the heretic assents to the true and dissents from the false. In both cases it is a chance occurrence since the depravity of the will is a hindrance to the truth. It is not clear how this contributes to supporting the claim that it is possible to assent to “a is b” and then dissent from the same proposition after some period of time. The suggestion may be that the effort of the will which causes the heretic to assent unhesitatingly to the false or to the true generates a disposition in

producat: assensus enim in illo casu erit multo remissior quam si non essent rationes oppositæ. Eodem modo totus calor ut 6 producit calorem remissorem ut 6 videlicet ut duo stante frigore ut 4 Et secundum magnitudinem actus volendi assensus erit intensior.

³⁵⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 2^{va}]. Ex isto sequitur quod nunc possum assentire huic “a est b” nunc illi dissentire non subito; assensus enim durat per aliquid tempus.

³⁵¹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 2^{va}]. Patet per appositionem actus volendi heretici non necessitantur assentire heresi nec dissentire fidei hoc absit sed excæceti sunt ex sua malitia et non rationabiliter acquiescunt vero.

the heretic which is hard to change. The heretic is disposed to adhere to the false and to dissent from the true, but it is not necessary that the heretic behaves in such a way. The assent generated through the effort of the will continues for some time, but the effort of the will can be reduced to nothing at some time. Hence the heretic may abandon a dissent from a true proposition or an assent to a false proposition.

The assent to a proposition of faith insofar as it is based on a combination of a topical argument and a positive movement of the will surpasses the limits of reason. William Manderston writes that the positively affected will (*voluntas pia affectata*) causes the intellect to believe more than reason proves, that is, it prompts the intellect to assent to a given proposition to which the motive would not be sufficient to cause the intellect to assent.³⁵² This prompts the following difficulty: Are articles of faith opposed to natural reason?

Mair writes that natural reason proceeds from true and known principles to true conclusions according to the light of nature. It is useful to consider the account given by Manderston who defines natural reason as knowledge of what is possible (*cognitio possibilis*) and it is that which is based on those things which we experience without the benefit of revelation or authority. He continues: it is clear that without revelation or authority the human intellect would infer that it is not possible that something simple is really several things and the human intellect would also infer that a woman is not able to bear a child and remain a virgin.³⁵³ These different understandings of natural reason

³⁵² Manderston. *Bipartitum*, [sig. f 1^{ra}-rb]. Patet igitur quod voluntas pia affectata facit intellectum credere plusquam ratio probat, hoc est, facit assentire alicui propositioni cui motivum non esset sufficiens facere intellectum assentire.

³⁵³ Manderston. *Bipartitum*, [sig. f 1^{rb}]. Sed hic occurrit difficultas utrum articuli fidei sint contra rationem naturalem. Pro hoc dubio notandum est quod ratio naturalis sive summe naturale dicitur cognitio possibilis viatori ex his quæ experimur seclusa revelatione vel auctoritate et certum est quod seclusa revelatione vel auctoritate investigando atque concludendo ex his quæ experimur

result in distinct conclusions. Mair, like Manderston, is also challenged to explain how it is that one thing is three things, i.e., the doctrine of divine simplicity and of the trinity. He responds: Many articles of faith at first glance appear to the philosopher to be opposed to natural reason but they are not.³⁵⁴ This is a sharp contrast to the following conclusion of Manderston who explains that articles of faith are said to be both against and on account of natural reason, that is, against the assent which would have been produced naturally from those things which we experience and those things which we know without the benefit of revelation or authority.³⁵⁵

The response to the question “How is the Christian to acquire faith?” must be given in terms of the intellect and will. It is a combination of an act of intellect and an act of will. The intellect, as we have seen, is a power of understanding: it apprehends, it remembers and it judges. It is capable of scientific knowledge which is based on evident principles and it is capable of opinative knowledge or opinion. An opinion is a claim to knowledge which is held only hesitantly. Neither scientific knowledge nor opinion constitute faith. Scientific knowledge which is naturally caused by principles necessitating the intellect, lacks the element of free causation which is so necessary to faith being a virtue. An opinion in and of itself is hesitant and thus lacks the epistemic certitude that is attributed to an assent of faith. The virtue of faith is a state in which an assent of faith is neither exclusively naturally

et in magna indagatione cognoscere possumus inferret humanus intellectus quod nulla res simplex est plures res et quælibet earum et quod mulier non potest parere virgo manens.

³⁵⁴ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 1; [fol. 3^{rb}]. Multi autem articuli fidei primo obtuitu videntur philosopho contra rationem naturalem sed non sunt.

³⁵⁵ Manderston. *Bipartitum*, [sig. f 1^{rb}-va]. Ex isto patet solutio ad dubium quod tales articuli fidei sint dicendi contra et præter rationem naturalem, id est, contra assensum qui naturaliter haberetur ex his quæ experimur et humana cognitione cognoscimus seclusa revelatione vel auctoritate. Et istud probabilius quam oppositum.

nor exclusively freely caused. It is an assent which is produced by a combination of a probable argument and a positively affected act of will. Faith is firmly grounded in human experience and is rational but the evidence it affords us is itself insufficient to produce the certainty that characterizes an act of faith. When we believe an article of faith we are extremely reluctant to abandon such a proposition. This reluctance originates only partially in the evidence before us. Our determination to maintain this proposition in the face of adversity is motivated by an act of will positively inclined to accept the proposition as true and to do so without hesitation. Hence faith as a virtue is rational if and only if this movement of the will is guided by the intellect for the will is blind without the counsel of reason.

IS FAITH AN INTELLECTUAL OR MORAL VIRTUE?

It is now the moment to return to a question raised earlier in the discussion: "Is faith an intellectual or moral virtue?". The difficulty in answering the questions rests on the fact that there is an ambivalence in Mair's account of faith. Mair appears to describe the virtue of faith as intellectual excellence since an assent of faith is achieved only if there is an appropriate balance between an act of intellect and an act of will in relation to the object of belief. On the other hand, faith is a perfection of the will. It is in our power. And God would not oblige us to believe that which is beyond our power, therefore we are free to believe or not to believe. We choose to believe and our choice is reasonable. Faith as an intellectual virtue must balance the extreme characterized as blind faith and the other extreme which identifies faith with knowledge.

However, there is a definite sense in which faith is a moral virtue since acquiring faith leads to excellence of character. The pilgrim who argues that "Every highest good ought to be loved, God is the highest

Good, therefore God ought to be loved” lives his life accordingly. That virtue is an excellence of character emerges more clearly when the example is not theological in nature. Understood in this way an assent of faith^{is} any non-evident, true assent. Faith, broadly understood, is any fiduciary relationship. Trust is extended to someone on the basis of their character. I judge that the person before me is to be trusted because of what I know about the person and what I know because others have told me. These are probable reasons for extending my trust to that person but they are not sufficient to cause an assent of trust—my assent continues to be hesitant. Trust is only acquired when my will removes the hesitance from my assent to the propositions which have suggested only good grounds for trusting that person. There is no doubt that trust is an intellectual virtue insofar as it is an excellence of thought. However, it is clear that trust guides our actions with others and in this sense can properly be said to be a moral virtue.

Moreover, Mair often adheres to the principle that the whole should be named after the most important part. Hence the solution to the question hinges on determining whether the most important part of faith is intellectual or is concerned with excellence of character. I am not clear on the answer to this difficult and interesting question. The temptation to claim that the most important part of the virtue of faith is the intellectual is strong since Mair emphasizes, as we have seen, that while both the intellect and the will cooperate in the production of an assent of faith it is also true that the will is powerless without the guidance of the intellect. Moreover, according to Mair, if the intellect and the will were separated by the absolute power of God, an assent of faith would inhere in the intellect and not the will. It was also shown that where propositions in the first instance seemed to contravene reason this did not mean that they were in reality contrary to reason. The

intellect could discover their reasonableness. One can conclude that faith is an intellectual virtue since this does not exclude the virtue of faith from being directive of human action. Thus, faith can be classed as an intellectual virtue without detracting from its importance in leading to the excellence of human character.

CHAPTER 8

CONCERNING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE, FAITH, OPINION

INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapters a detailed account was given of “How the Pilgrim is to Acquire Faith”. In the course of this discussion, the entire cognitive process of the pilgrim was investigated in order that an understanding might be achieved of the way in which the pilgrim acquires knowledge. Subsequently, attention was given to the distinction between evident assent and inevident assent with special reference to the distinction between knowledge and faith. Knowledge is characterized by unhesitant assents to propositions which are both dubitable and necessary which are fitted by nature to become evident by the application of premises. Faith is characterized by unhesitant assents to dubitable propositions that pertain to salvation. In this chapter attention will be given to the question: “Whether faith and knowledge are compatible?”.

ACTUAL KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH ARE NOT COMPATIBLE

The first thesis advanced by Mair contends that “acts of faith and of knowledge are not compatible in the same subject in relation to the same proximate object.”³⁵⁶ The “proximate object” is nothing other than the

³⁵⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 11^{ra}]. Prima est. Actus fidei et scientiæ non se compatiuntur in eodem subiecto respectu eiusdem obiecti propinqui.

conclusion.³⁵⁷ This thesis is obvious since if it were possible to give an assent of knowledge and an assent of faith in relation to the same proposition, then there would be both evident and inevident assent in relation to the same proposition, which is contradictory. Since scientific and faithful assents are differentiated at least in part on the basis of evidentness, namely in respect of the division between propositions of knowledge and faith. The division between evident and inevident assents is mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive. Even the application of syllogistic reasoning to a proposition of faith is insufficient to generate an evident assent. A proposition of faith as the object of assent is in the first instance both hesitant and inevident, the hesitance is only abandoned by means of the cooperation of the will positively affected to embrace the proposition. Mair gives the following explanation as regards the incompatibility of acts of knowledge and of faith in relation to the same complex:

The means which produces faith, namely authority or a topical argument, can be applied to a first principle. On the other hand, if it does not generate faith, this is because the evident and clear notion which is caused through the apprehension of terms impedes such a method from generating faith, and there is incompatibility between those acts, but a scientific assent is a clear notion. Therefore, if scientific assent precedes faith, it impedes the production of faith and if it finds faith it removes it from its midst.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁷ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 11^{ra}]. Obiectum autem propinquum conclusionem ipsam appello.

³⁵⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 11^{rb}-va]. Contra hoc argumentor. [viz., Actus fidei et scientiæ non se compatiuntur in eodem subiecto...] Medium productivum fidei, auctoritas vel argumentum topicum potest applicari primo principio. Si autem non generat fidem hoc immo est quia notitia evidens et clara quæ causatur ex apprehensione terminorum impedit tale medium generare fidem, et est impossibilitas inter illos actus. Sed assensus scientificus est notitia clara, ergo præcedens fidem eius productionem impedit, et ipsam inveniens e medio tollit.

Mair thinks that it is possible to argue against the first conclusion claiming that acts of knowledge and acts of faith are compatible in relation to the same conclusion, in the same way that intuitive notions and abstractive notions co-exist in relation to the same object of cognition. Mair concedes that it possible for someone to have an intuitive and abstractive notion in relation to the same object simultaneously, but he denies that this implies that the judgments they give rise to are compatible because intuitive notions cause evident judgments concerning the existence or non-existence of their objects while abstractive notions do not.³⁵⁹

AUTHORITY AND DEMONSTRATIVE KNOWLEDGE

A related issue concerns the role of authority and its relation to demonstrative knowledge. At issue was whether knowledge or faith was generated when both the demonstration and the authority of the ancient doctors was present to the pilgrim. Mair thought that it was obvious that knowledge corrupted the authority of the ancient doctors. He writes:

It is conceded that someone has an authoritative text, that is a proposition by an authoritative man along with a demonstrated conclusion, in order to show that someone who is not able to have demonstrations sometimes uses authorities, or to show that his doctrine agrees with many others. And this is most powerful after dialectical arguments, rarely after demonstrations. But, when demonstration and authority are adduced together a

³⁵⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 11^{va-vb}]. Contra primam conclusionem argumentor. Sortes habet notitiam abstractivam et intuitivam respectu eiusdem obiecti simul et semel, quarum una est notitia obscura et alia clara, ergo non inconvenit habere scientiam et fidem de eodem obiecto propinquo... Ad primum concedo antecedens. Non enim verum quod ego iam habens notitiam abstractivam "a" obiecti absentis illam amittam in præsencia "a" obiecti, quia nulla inter eas videtur repugnantia. Sed nego consequentiam, et causa est, quoniam non habemus aliqua iudicia opposita. Notitia enim intuitiva causat aliquod iudicium, abstractiva vero nullum saltem de præsenti.

scientific assent is caused in the intellect, and the authority does not cause an assent of faith. For acts of the active are in an inclined agent (*in patiente disposito*), Book 2 *De Anima* [414^b4]. Now, the mind is not then [sc., after a demonstration] inclined to receive faith. But, the assents in relation to the premises, which are different, are not opposed, but the assents to the conclusion, are opposed since it is the same conclusion. Why one knows one proposition and believes another is not at issue. Sometimes causes are opposed but not the effects, for example, whiteness and blackness are opposed, but the species are compatible with each other.³⁶⁰

Hence, while it is possible to know some premises and believe other premises in the same syllogisms, it is not possible that the assent one gives to the conclusion is both an act of knowledge and of faith. This is the case because otherwise it would follow that it is possible to adhere evidently and inevidently to the same proposition which, as we have already seen, is a contradiction.

INFUSED FAITH AND ACTUAL AND DISPOSITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The second thesis Mair considers, and the final one in our account, claims that “infused faith is compatible with both actual and dispositional knowledge”. It is a particularly theological thesis and a discussion of it need not detain us since we are primarily interested in philosophical issues. It is sufficient to note that it is a theological and

³⁶⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 11^vb]. Conceditur quod quis habet auctoritatem, hoc est, propositionem authenticī viri cum conclusione demonstrata, ad ostendendum quod ille qui non potest habere demonstrationes, utatur interdum auctoritatibus, vel ut suam doctrinam aliis conformem in multis ostendat. Et hoc facit potissimum post argumenta dialectica, raro post demonstrationes. Quando autem demonstratio et auctoritas simul adducuntur, assensus scientificus causatur in intellectu et auctoritas nullum assensum fidei causat. Actus enim activorum sunt in patiente disposito, secundo *De Anima*. Modo anima tunc non est disposita suscipere fidem. Assensus autem circa præmissas non repugnant, quæ sunt variæ. Assensus vero conclusionis adversantur cum est eadem. Quare quis sciat unam propositionem et credat aliam, non est dubium. Interdum causæ repugnant et non effectus ut albedo et nigredo repugnant, sed earum species sese compatiuntur.

not a philosophical matter since the proposition asserts that infused faith is not only a pre-requisite for all that is believed, but is also a pre-requisite for any assent whatsoever. This is a clear reminder that medieval philosophers are also theologians. The second thesis however relates closely to a distinction Mair draws, namely, when considering whether knowledge destroys faith.

According to Mair, it is clear that since infused faith is a pre-condition of all acts of understanding it is able to co-exist with both knowledge and acquired faith. At the same time it has been shown that it is not possible to have knowledge and faith in relation to the conclusion of the same syllogism. Though essentially a theological matter there is one final point that should be made concerning the relationship of knowledge to faith and the doctrine of meriting one's blessedness. It was thought that since acts of faith and acts knowledge are both acts of intellect, having knowledge of, and a having a belief in, a conclusion are equally meritorious: "and though the will through its act cooperates in the production of faith and not in the production of knowledge, nevertheless it is able to will both equally meritoriously, for example, I will seek a demonstration which demonstrates this, "God exists" but I am ready to believe firmly when I do not acquire (*invenio*) the knowledge".³⁶¹ Moreover, Mair continues that it is maintained by Gregory that "faith has no merit where human reason supplies the experience. He [sc., Gregory] has in mind the case when a man would not believe unless not believing were not humanly possible."³⁶² Hence,

³⁶¹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 11^vb]. Et licet voluntas per suum actum concurrat ad productionem fidei et non ad productionem scientiæ, tamen potest utrumque velle æque meritorie ut volo inquirere demonstrationem ad demonstrandam hanc, Deus est, paratus tamen credere firmiter ubi non invenio scientiam.

³⁶² Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 11^vb]. Illud autem dictum Beati Gregorii in homilia: Fides non habet meritum ubi humana ratio præbet experimentum, intelligitur ubi homo non crederet nisi humanitus vinceretur ad credendum.

whether the pilgrim's assent of faith merits blessedness or not depends on whether the assent of faith is in relation to a proposition which is properly an object of faith. If the pilgrim was to adhere to a proposition through faith and not knowledge where the proposition was properly a knowable proposition then there would be no merit to his assent of faith. Mair continues:

It is otherwise in the case of the industrious Christian attempting to demonstrate it [sc., a proposition of faith]. Indeed, when there is a strong sophistical reason inclining to the opposite of the act of believing, then believing is of more merit, because then believing is more difficult. Now, art and virtue are about the difficult *Ethics* 2 [1105²⁹]. And thus there is more merit in believing that God is one in essence and three in persons and that the body of Christ is contained under the species of bread and wine, than in believing that God exists.³⁶³

The application of reason to understanding faith is in-itself meritorious. Moreover, if through reason an article which pertains to salvation is shown to be barely probable, i.e., "God is Three and One" and the pilgrim continues to believe by means of a will positively affected then that act of belief is more meritorious than believing an article of faith which is more probable, i.e., "God exists".

ACQUIRED FAITH AND DISPOSITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Related to the first thesis is the claim that "acquired dispositional knowledge and acquired faith are not compatible in relation to the same

³⁶³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 11^vb-12^{ra}]. Secus est in casu laboriosi Christiani conantis illam demonstrare. Ubi vero est fortis ratio sophistica inclinans ad oppositum actus credendi ibi credere est magis meritorium quia tunc credere est difficilior. Modo ars et virtus circa difficile secundo *Ethicorum*. Et sic magis est meritorium credere quod Deus est unus in essentia et trinus in persona et quod corpus Christi continetur sub speciebus panis et vini quam credere quod Deus est.

proximate object”.³⁶⁴ The incompatibility is defended on the basis that the conclusions of acts of knowledge and acts of faith are not, in the first instance, compatible. Moreover, that the dispositions of knowledge and faith are not compatible is supported by Aristotle who thought that all virtues are generated and destroyed in an opposed way by the same means.³⁶⁵ However, against the third thesis Mair presents the following argument:

Suppose that Socrates has an opinative or an erroneous [and] very intense disposition of a conclusion “a”. Suppose that a demonstration is adduced for it. Through the fourth thesis of this question, [sc., a disposition of acquired faith is not opposed to an act of knowledge and vice versa], actual knowledge will co-exist with an opinative disposition, and any act howsoever small can produce a disposition. Therefore [acquired faith and dispositional knowledge are compatible in relation to the same proximate object].³⁶⁶

Mair thought if an opinion precedes the generation of knowledge through the application of premises to a probable argument, then an act of knowledge can co-exist with an opinative disposition for a brief period of time. Consequently, if an opinative disposition is able to co-exist with an act of knowledge for a brief period of time it must be able

³⁶⁴ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 11^{rb}]. Tertia conclusio. Habitus scientificus acquisitus et fides acquisita non se compatiuntur respectu eiusdem obiecti propinqui.

³⁶⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 11^{va}]. Probatur conclusio. Utrobique tanta est repugnantia inter habitus acquisitos quanta inter eorum actus. Modo actus scientificus et actus fidei repugnant ex prima [conclusio]. Igitur. Probatio maioris, quia ut dicitur 2 *Ethicorum* [1103^b6-1103^b25] virtutes fiunt et corrumpuntur ab eisdem contrario modo factis.

³⁶⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 13^{ra}]. Contra tertiam conclusionem arguitur sic. Habeat Sortes habitum opinativum vel erroneum “a” conclusionis valde intensum, adducatur ei demonstratio, scientia actualis stabit cum habitu opinativo per quartam conclusionem [sc., Habitus fidei acquisitæ non repugnat actui scientifico ediverso.] huius questionis, et quilibet actus quantumcumque parvus potest producere habitum. Igitur.

to co-exist perpetually and its nature does not rule this out.³⁶⁷ He continues

an opinative disposition is of some resistance and one [item of] knowledge is of a greater activity than another, as is obvious from two knowledges of a superior and an inferior kind (*species*), as regards intensity and weakness. Thus one opinative disposition is of a greater resistance than another which is inferior or weaker in kind.³⁶⁸

Dispositions and acts are susceptible of degrees. The more intense an act of knowledge the less resistance will be exhibited by an opinative disposition. Similarly, the more intense the assent to an opinion, the more difficult it will be for that resistance to be overcome. However, the longer an act of knowledge endures the more an opinative disposition will be corrupted since the act of knowledge “acts according to its entire activity”.³⁶⁹ Mair draws this conclusion: while acts of knowledge and opinative dispositions incline to formally opposed effects they are only virtually and not formally opposed to each other.³⁷⁰ Acts of knowledge and opinative dispositions are virtually opposed to each insofar as they are ways of relating to the same proposition. Where acts of knowledge produce scientific understanding, an opinative disposition inclines one to opinion. It is clear that the intensity of acts of knowledge destroys opinative dispositions in relation to their activity and resistance. But it was thought necessary that an opinative disposition could endure for

³⁶⁷ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 13^{ra}]. Actus scientificus stabit cum habitu opinativo per breve tempus, ergo perpetuo potest cum ipso stare, et ei non adversatur suapte natura.

³⁶⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 13^{ra}]. Item habitus opinativus est alicuius resistantiæ et una scientia est maioris activitatis quam alia, ut patet de duabus scientiis superioris speciei et inferioris de intensa et remissa. Sic unus habitus opinativus est maioris resistantiæ quam alius inferioris speciei vel remissior.

³⁶⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 13^{rb}]. Actus autem scientificus quanto diutius continuatur, tanto plus habitus opinionis corrumpit, quia agit secundum totam suam actionem.

³⁷⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, [fol. 11^{rb}]. Actus namque scientificus et habitus opinativus virtualiter contrariantur et non formaliter et inclinant in effectus formaliter contrarios

some time before being destroyed by the activity of a scientific act of understanding. Thus the third thesis claiming the incompatibility of acquired faith and acquired knowledge should be rejected since even the smallest act produces a disposition.

The next thesis to be considered declares that “a disposition of acquired faith is not opposed to an act of knowledge and not vice versa.”³⁷¹ According to Mair, this is obvious by induction. He thought that this was the case since it is possible to admit to deceitfulness, or some other kind of intemperance, and to have a pre-disposition to perform similar acts of deceitfulness in the future.³⁷² What is being suggested is that the admission to having been deceitful is a recognition that acts of this kind are wrong. However, this recognition is itself insufficient to compel a change in behavior. Mair concludes: “Therefore a disposition and an act that are opposed to each other can coexist”.³⁷³

OPINION, FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE

The implications of the intensity and remission of different kinds of intellectual acts, namely, opinion, faith and knowledge are interesting since it was thought probable that an intense act of opinion might not be destroyed by a remiss, or less intense act of knowledge. However, this consequence was not to imply that the destruction of knowledge could occur directly through the activity of an opinion. The analogy is given in terms of the activity and resistance of physical properties. For example, it was customary to maintain that humidity is greater in

³⁷¹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, [fol. 11^{rb}]. Quarta conclusio. Habitus fidei acquisitæ non repugnat actui scientifico nec ediverso.

³⁷² Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 11^{va}]. Quarta conclusio patet inductive. Nam si lubricus vel aliqua alia specie intemperantiæ irretitus pæniteat de mala vita præterita, constat quod habebit magnam proclivitatem ad peccata præterita, et hoc non nisi ratione habitus remanentis.

³⁷³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 11^{va}]. Ergo habitus et actus oppositi simul stant.

resistance than it is in activity and that dryness is less an active property than a resistant one. Therefore, it might be claimed that an opinion is more resistant than it is active and that knowledge is more active than it is resistant. Consequently an opinion is not, properly speaking, an active cause in the destruction of knowledge; rather, knowledge gives way to opinion through its own infirmity. It might be suggested that an opinion which is infinitely intense can destroy a scientific assent which is finite in intensity. However, if this is granted then one ought to also allow that an opinion of great but finite intensity destroys some given scientific assent.³⁷⁴ This is not a reasonable position since it would follow that ultimately all claims to knowledge would fall victim to sophistic or opinative arguments to the contrary. What emerges from the account that Mair provides is the reaffirmation that “an opinion is hesitant concerning the opposite. That is, an opinative assent can be destroyed through opposed reasons if many difficulties are adduced. An evident assent is indestructible.”³⁷⁵

OPINION GENERATED, KNOWLEDGE CORRUPTED

The interest in the relationship of dispositional knowledge and acquired faith gave rise to the claim that a sophistic argument is capable of causing an erroneous assent thereby destroying a scientific assent. This was supported by the claim that error is capable of destroying knowledge in relation to the conclusion of a demonstration and it is not necessary that it destroys knowledge of either the premises of the demonstration or of any self-evident proposition. This was put forward

³⁷⁴ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 13^{va}]. Et si admittas quod infinita opinio quamcumque scientiam quantumlibet intensam finitam corrumpat, dicere debes quod multum intensa opinio et finita aliquam scientiam corrumpat.

³⁷⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 13^{vb}]. ...opinio est cum formidine de oposito, idest, assensus opinativus potest deleri per rationes oppositas, si multæ difficiles adducantur. Assensus autem evidens non potest deleri.

on the basis that assent to the premises of a demonstration is always more clear than error.³⁷⁶ It is obvious, as Mair indicates, that such a distinction is not a good one since, like the assent that is given to the conclusion of demonstration, the assents to the premises of a demonstration and self-evident propositions are themselves evident assents. Mair explains that “if you admit that error is able to destroy an evident notion, such as a piece of scientific knowledge, [then] gradually you ascend from the destruction of the piece of knowledge to the assents to the premises and the self-evident proposition.”³⁷⁷ In brief, the question of whether knowledge is capable of being destroyed by error is tantamount to asking whether an evident assent which is an assent which is true, unhesitant, and naturally caused by principles compelling the intellect can be destroyed by an erroneous assent which is, by its very nature, always inevident.

Starting with the assumption that knowledge and opinion are themselves compatible it might be argued that since opinion is more hesitant than faith, it follows that knowledge and faith are themselves compatible in relation to the same conclusion. On this account it would be possible to defend the compatibility of knowledge and faith on the grounds that while knowledge is adhered to more intensely than any opinion it is also true that a series of topical arguments could remove all hesitance from the hesitance of an opinative assent. In this way a scientific assent would be capable of superseding an opinative one. This is only possible if one accepts that opinative and scientific assents are of

³⁷⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 13^{va}]. Dices. Error potest corrumpere scientiam, non tamen oportet quod corrumpat notitiam præmissarum demonstrationis vel propositionis per se notæ, cum assensus præmissarum et propositionis per se notæ sunt clariores.

³⁷⁷ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 13^{va}]. ...si admittas quod error potest corrumpere unam notitiam evidentem puta scientiam, paulatim a corruptione scientiæ ad corruptionem assensus præmissarum et propositionis per se notæ conscendes.

the same most specific species because this would assume that the hesitance of an opinative assent is extrinsic to the nature of such an assent. Hence there would be nothing incongruous in the hesitance of an assent being destroyed and superseded by the certainty of a scientific assent. The response to this is obvious since we have already examined the claim that it is not possible to acquire faith even by means of an infinite number of topical arguments. Mair thought that his opponent's arguments allowed for an infinite, but not a finite, set of opinions inhering in the same intellect to generate knowledge.³⁷⁸ Moreover it follows from his opponent's position that "an infinite set of topical arguments could produce an evident assent, and thus another infinite set of topical arguments could produce a notion as clear as first principles."³⁷⁹ This is absurd, since according to Mair, an opinion is by its very nature always hesitant. Hence, while it is tempting to think that an infinite set of topical arguments will remove the hesitancy of the assent this is simply not consonant with the technical sense of the term. However, it is true that an infinite set of topical arguments in support of an opinion increase the firmness with which that opinion is held. Mair is explicit on this matter. It is not that the hesitancy of the assent is diminished, "for strictly speaking, topical arguments do not diminish the hesitancy, but increase the [intensity of] assent".³⁸⁰

Given that there is a basic incompatibility between faithful and opinative assents in relation to the same conclusion, there remains the difficulty of accounting for the claim that faith is acquired by means of

³⁷⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 12^{rb}]. Dices. Infinita argumenta topica generant scientiam, sed non finita.

³⁷⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 12^{rb}]. Contra hoc insto. Tunc argumenta topica producerent assensum evidentem, et sic alia infinita producerent notitiam adeo claram ut primi principii, quod est absonum.

³⁸⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 12^{rb}]. De diminutione autem formidinis nihil ad propositum, argumenta namque topica non proprie diminuunt formidinem, sed augent assensum.

the conclusion of a topical argument and an act of will. The assent in both instances is to the same proximate object of the proposition, i.e., the conclusion. The crucial characteristic that permits the existence of faith and opinion is the fact that the hesitance with which an opinion is held can be reduced. It can be destroyed by other opinative arguments tending towards the contradictory of the proposition, but more importantly in this instance, the hesitance can be destroyed by an act of will. Thus the role of *pia affectio* in producing an assent of faith. Opinative assents remain forever hesitant. Only a positive movement of the will can be destroy the hesitance of an opinative assent; however, if the hesitance is removed by an act of will, then there is no longer an opinative assent; instead, there is a faithful one. Opinative and faithful assents belong to different and mutually exclusive categories: no opinative assent is an act of faith and no act of faith is an opinative assent.

FAITH AND ERROR

There was some speculation concerning whether the pilgrim was able to assent to a proposition in error and to know that the assent was in fact an erroneous one. It was generally agreed that error occurs when someone assents to a false proposition or dissents from a true proposition.³⁸¹ Though I will not attend to the long standing debate concerning the way in which a proposition is true or false it was commonly held that a proposition is true if things are as signified by the proposition and conversely a proposition is false if things are not as signified by the proposition.³⁸² The question is whether someone is able

³⁸¹ See e.g., Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 14^{ra}]. Error est assensus falsi vel dissensus veri.

³⁸² Gabriel Nuchelmans. Nuchelmans. *Late-Scholastic and Humanist Theories of the Proposition*. (Amsterdam, 1980); [pp. 114-119]. Nuchelmans. *Theories of the Proposition*. The definitive philosophical/historical accounts of the truth and

knowingly to assent to a false proposition. It is problematic to claim that it is possible since knowledge is characterized by evidentness. Hence, Mair writes:

No one is able to know that he is mistaken. Proof. Grant that Socrates knows that he is mistaken about proposition “a”, therefore he evidently knows that he is assenting to something false or dissenting from something true. Whichever of these is granted he neither assents to something false, nor dissents from something true. If he knows that this is the case no one is able to assent (especially by nature) to something false knowing that it is false.³⁸³

Moreover, Mair continues, it is not possible for someone to assent to a proposition that he thinks is false since

if he judges that he is assenting to a false proposition, then he has the judgment, ““a” is false” and he judges thus. It is not in his power to assent to that proposition although for a long time it had been thought (*putatur*) that this was the case. Thus, no one is able to believe that he is mistaken about proposition “a”.³⁸⁴

This would seem to imply that it is never possible to recognize the possibility of sometimes being mistaken. This is simply not the case

falsity of propositions are *Theories of the Proposition: Ancient and Medieval Conceptions of the Bearers of Truth and Falsity* (Amsterdam, 1973) and *Late-Scholastic and Humanist Theories of the Proposition*. See also Broadie, *Introduction to Medieval Logic*, [p. 58] Broadie gives a concise account of Buridan’s pivotal definition which he reports as follows: “Every true proposition is true because, howsoever the proposition signifies, so it is in the thing signified or in the things signified”. See John Buridan, *Tractatus de consequentiis*, ed. J. Schneide, (Munich, 1983); [p. 17].

³⁸³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 14^{ra}]. Isto præmisso [viz., Error est assensus falsi vel dissensus veri.] dicatur quod nullus potest scire errare. Probatur sic. Da quod Sortes sciat se errare circa “a” propositionem; ergo evidenter cognoscit se assentire falso vel dissentire vero. Quocumque illorum dato nec falso assentit nec vero dissentit. Si sciat ipsum esse tale, nemo potest assentire (potissimum naturaliter) falso scito esse tali.

³⁸⁴ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 14^{ra}]. Si iudicat (sc., Sortes) quod assentit falso, tunc habet iudicium quod “a” est falsum et sic iudicat. Non est in facultate sua illi assentire quamvis diu putatur talis. Sic nemo potest credere se errare circa a propositionem.

since as Mair indicates there is nothing to prevent the pilgrim from opinatively assenting to the fact that he errs in one of his assents whether actual or dispositional.³⁸⁵ How does the pilgrim come to realize that one of his assents is erroneous?³⁸⁶ The response is full of insight. In most general terms, how the pilgrim comes to be aware of an erroneous assent is described as follows: There are certainly occasions when over a period of time a number of good reasons, that are opposed to the proposition to which assent has been given, present themselves to the pilgrim. These reasons suggest that assent to the contradictory of the original proposition is more reasonable. The pilgrim, Mair writes,

as a result begins to let slip the assents to the propositions to which he previously assented which he thought were true at the time at which he assented. Now, however, when he assents to the opposite he judges that the reasons were frivolous and that he had been deceived, and in this way he begins to know that he had been mistaken.³⁸⁷

The pilgrim comes to realise that he is mistaken in virtue of his awareness that he is in possession of a certain quality and this quality is an error. There is no coincidence in describing error as quality. More explicitly it is a quality which vitally modifies the intellective power. Hence, error like all other things which vitally modify the intellective power is a notion.

³⁸⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 14^{ra}]. Dictum est circa "a" vel "b" propositionem quia non videtur inconueniens quod quis assentiat opinative quod ipse in aliquo assensu actuali vel habituali erret.

³⁸⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 14^{ra}]. Petis quomodo quis incipit se scire errasse.

³⁸⁷ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 5; [fol. 14^{ra}]. Hoc modo Sortes assentit huic "a" Homo differt ab homine, vel "a" cælum contingenter est cælum, propter aliquas exponentes, quas reputat communi modo loquendi conformes. Tandem successu temporis aliquibus rationibus urgetur rationabilius assentire contradictoriis illarum, et per consequens incipit amittere assensus propositionum quibus ante assentiebat, quas veras putabat tempore quo assentiebat. Nunc autem cum opposito assentit, iudicat illas ratione orationes frivolas, et se fuisse deceptum, et sic incipit scire errasse.

CONCLUSION

The question “whether faith and knowledge are compatible” has been answered on the basis of a careful consideration of the relationship between the evident assent of demonstrative knowledge and the inevident assent of faith, opinion and error. Moreover, it has been shown that in order to determine whether knowledge and faith are compatible it is necessary to distinguish between actual and dispositional knowledge, actual and dispositional faith, and so on. For, as we saw, while it is not possible for an act of faith and an act of knowledge to stand in relation to the same proposition this does not imply that it is not possible for an act of faith and dispositional knowledge to co-exist.

CHAPTER 9

IS THEOLOGY THEORETICAL OR PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE?

INTRODUCTION

Mair, in common with many medieval philosophers, thought that an adequate theory of knowledge was necessary to explain how the pilgrim is able to acquire faith. As we have seen, one of the building blocks of late-medieval epistemology is the notion. We have so far discussed several divisions between notions. One further division is particularly relevant to our discussion— that between theoretical and practical notions. Theoretical notions give rise to theoretical knowledge which is knowledge of the reason why it is and why something is the way that it is. In contrast, practical notions give rise to practical knowledge which is concerned with action and necessarily involves an act of will. Practical knowledge shows what is to be pursued and what is to be avoided. This chapter is dedicated to clarifying the distinction between theoretical and practical notions. The discussion is introduced by the following question: “Whether theology is practical or theoretical (*speculativa*) knowledge”.³⁸⁸

SOME DEFINITIONS

The first distinction that should be made in relation to practical and theoretical knowledge is that where the former concerns understanding

³⁸⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{ra}]. An theologia sit scientia practica an speculativa.

and is directive of human activity, the latter is exclusively concerned with understanding and is not directive of human activity. In order to clarify the meaning of the terms “practical” (*practicus*), and “theoretical” (*speculativus*) Mair gives a brief account of their origin. He reports that the Latin for “*praxis*” is “*actus*” (act) or “*operatio*” (operation) and “*practicus*” is that which is “*operativus*” (operative).³⁸⁹ The Latin for “*theoria*” is “*speculatio*” or “*contemplatio*”. On that account “*theoreticus*” has the same sense as “*speculativus*” or “*contemplativus*”.³⁹⁰ It should be noted that there are instances when Mair employs the term *praxis* in the original Greek to indicate a sense of the practical (*praxis*) in a more inclusive sense than is communicated by either the term “*actus*” or “*operatio*”. *Praxis* is most accurately defined as “an act of a power different from the intellect fitted to be directed by an act of the intellect, or [it is defined] thus, *praxis* is an elicited or commanded act of will.”³⁹¹ On the occasions where Mair uses *praxis* in this sense, the term *praxis* will be retained in the translation. The contrast which is being developed is that the various expressions employed in order to refer to practical knowledge embody a reference to something beyond intellectual activity, for example, building or creating something like a house. In contrast, “theoretical knowledge (*speculatio*) is an act of intellect not tending beyond the intellect”.³⁹² Theoretical knowledge does not aim at anything beyond intellectual activity, for

³⁸⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{ra}]. *Praxis* Græce, dicitur actus Latine seu operatio, et practicum idem est quod operativum.

³⁹⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{ra}]. *Theoria* Græce, dicitur speculatio seu contemplatio Latine, inde theoreticum id est speculativum seu contemplativum.

³⁹¹ Mair. *In tertium*, q. 8, d. 33; [fol. 82^{rb}]. *Praxis* est actus alterius potentiae ab intellectu natus ab intellectus actu dirigi, vel sic, *praxis* est actus elicited voluntatis vel ab ea imperatus.

³⁹² Mair. *In tertium*, q. 8, d. 33; [fol. 82^{rb}]. *Speculatio* est actus intellectus non tendens ultra intellectum.

example, it is not knowledge directed to building or creating a house.

Mair gives the following definition of theoretical knowledge:

Theoretical knowledge (*speculatio*) is a judgment by which something is judged to exist or not to exist, or to be such or not to be such, and thus about tenses other than the present (*de extrinsecis temporibus*)³⁹³, judging nothing about what should be done, for example the judgment by which it is judged that “God is Three and One”.³⁹⁴

Where Mair provides only one definition of theoretical knowledge he gives four definitions for the term “practical knowledge” but limits his discussion to the two definitions relevant to his inquiry. Our discussion will be based on the two definitions Mair considers at length. First, practical knowledge, he writes, “is taken to be an act which is in the power of the agent.”³⁹⁵ Second, practical knowledge “is taken to be every elicited act which agrees with the dictate of right reason.”³⁹⁶ Mair draws several consequences. First, “every act of will is practical”. “This is obvious”, according to Mair, since an act of will “is an act existing in the power of the agent. Therefore, by definition, it is practical, first the elicited act and then the act commanded by it.”³⁹⁷ Despite Mair’s claim to the contrary, this is quite obscure. The attention of the reader is directed to the fact that an act of will consists of first the

³⁹³ The other tenses to which Mair refers are the past, the future, the possible, and the imagined. See Mair. *De ampliacione*. [sig. gg 7^{ra}]. “...there are five temporal differences “is”, “was”, “will be”, “can be”, and “imagined to be”. For the Latin see fn. 182.

³⁹⁴ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{rb}]. *Speculatio autem est iudicium quo iudicatur aliquid esse vel non esse, seu esse tale vel non esse tale, et ita de extrinsecis temporibus, nihil iudicando de operabili, ut iudicium quo iudicatur deus esse trinus et unus.*

³⁹⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{rb}]. *Tertio capitur pro operatione quæ est in potestate operantis.*

³⁹⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{rb}]. *Quarto modo accipitur pro omni operatione conformiter elicita dictaminum rectæ rationis.*

³⁹⁷ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{rb}]. *Omnis actus voluntatis est praxis. Patet quia est actus existens in potestate operantis, ergo est praxis, per eius definitionem primo actus elicited, postea actus imperatus ab eo.*

elicited act (*actus elicitus*) and afterwards the commanded act (*actus imperatus*). The elicited act is the volition to perform an action while the performance of that action is the commanded act. Manderston gives a good account:

The elicited act is the act of the will itself. Of this kind there are volition and nolition. The commanded act is the act caused by means of the act of will commanding that such an act is to be done. For example, I will to walk. This volition is called the elicited act and the walking or the external act is called the commanded act.³⁹⁸

Mair puts this succinctly “every act emanating from an elicited act is a commanded act.”³⁹⁹ The proof offered in support of the statement that every act of will is practical is now more perspicuous since it is clear that in this instance the elicited act culminates in some kind of activity, e.g., walking. A helpful way of distinguishing the elicited act from the commanded act is in terms of an inner act and an outer act of will. The elicited act is an inner act of volition or nolition, the commanded act is the outer act extending to the external thing willed or denied by the inner act of choosing or denying. However this would be to claim that all elicited acts of will culminate in a commanded act. This is not the case since there can be factors which mitigate against an elicited act giving

³⁹⁸ Manderston. *Bipartitum*, [sig. b 1^vb]. Elicitus quidem est actus ipsius voluntatis cuiusmodi est volitio vel nolitio. Imperatus est actus causatus mediante actu voluntatis imperantis talem actum fieri. Exempli gratia volo ambulare ista volitio dicitur actus elicitus et ambulatio sive talis operatio exterior dicitur actus imperatus. Cf., Mair. *In primum*, d. 17, q. 7; [fol. 62^{va}]. Ad vigesimumnonum ubi petitur quæ res est actus exterior vel actus imperatus, dicitur quod frequenter est homo vel eius organum. Quando enim homo occidit homicidium est volitio qua vult occidere hominem proprie, et ille est actus elicitus. Homo occidens brachium vel ferrum est actus exterior. Actus est res agens quæ non est anima nec animæ inherens. Actus exterior est operatio transiens in obiectum exterius. Et operatio activa est res operans, homicidium exterius nihil aliud est quam homo actualiter applicans organa pro quæ mediate vel immediate occidit. Comestio exterior est homo cibum per os assumens. Et ita in aliis suo modo dicatur.

³⁹⁹ Mair. *In primum*, d. 17, q. 7; [fol. 62^{va}]. Sed de actu imperato dicitur quod omnis actus ab actu elicitio emanens est actus imperatus.

rise to a commanded act. Thus while it is helpful to draw the distinction in terms of internal and external acts it must be recognized that it is not comprehensive.

THE THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL INTELLECT

The way in which theoretical and practical notions are distinguished does not rule out the possibility of acts of intellect being practical. Mair explains:

that the intellect is practical by way of extension does not imply that no act of intellect is practical, for though the intellect does not immediately extend to its activity, nevertheless it is extended by means of the command of the will. For since the intellect commands that there should be speculation, the will commands the intellect to speculate.⁴⁰⁰

Mair appeals to Aristotle's discussion in the Third Book of the *De Anima* of which, in a later discussion, he gives the following interpretation: "the intellect is practical only by means of extension, now to extend is to tend beyond oneself, therefore a notion is called practical because it tends beyond itself".⁴⁰¹ Thus how the theoretical and practical intellect are to be distinguished is similar to the way in which the intellect and will are to be distinguished as powers of the mind. It is worth remembering that according to Mair the terms "intellect" and "will" name the same simple and indivisible substance, i.e., the mind. Nevertheless, though at the metaphysical level it is true to claim that the intellect is the will in every way, this does not mean that the intellect and the will are completely indistinguishable. They are distinguished

⁴⁰⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.* q. 6; [fol. 14^{rb}]. Septimo sequitur quod illud 3 *De Anima*. [432^b26-433^a1] Intellectus extensive sit practicus, non infert quod nullus actus intellectus sit practicus, nam licet intellectus non extendatur immediate ad suam operationem, tamen extenditur mediante imperio voluntatis, nam cum dictat intellectus speculandum esse, voluntas imperat intellectui ut speculetur.

⁴⁰¹ Mair. *In tertium*, q. 8, d. 33; [fol. 82^{rb}]. ...intellectus sola extensione sit practicus, modo extendere est extra se tendere; ergo notitia vocatur practica quia extra se tendit.

according to reason and are thus “beings of reason” (*entia rationis*). “Intellect” refers to the mind engaged in an act of understanding and “will” refers to the mind engaged in an act of choosing or denying. The terms express different ways of relating to the objects of the mind. The “intellect is practical by extension” since it extends to its objects by means of the will. This brings us to the question: In what way are the theoretical intellect and the practical intellect to be distinguished?

Mair gives the following account of the theoretical and practical intellect:

Moreover, the intellect is said to be practical because of a practical disposition and a practical act, and to be theoretical because of a theoretical act and a theoretical disposition. It is not so much a real distinction between the practical and the theoretical intellect, but it is numerically the same intellect, because under one concept (*ratio*) it is called practical, and under another theoretical, just as the intellect is really the will. This is how it comes about that this is literally true: “A practical disposition inheres in the theoretical intellect, at the same time a theoretical disposition inheres in the practical intellect.”⁴⁰²

The similarity of the argument in favour of the identity of the practical and theoretical intellect to that offered in support of the claim that the mind and its powers are identical is undeniable. It will be remembered that the terms “intellect” and “will” were predicated of the mind only by means of extrinsic denomination. In a similar way, the terms “theoretical intellect” and “practical intellect” are also predicated of the mind and each other by means of extrinsic denomination. The

⁴⁰² Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 15^{rb}-va]. Intellectus autem practicus ab habitu et actu practico denominatur et speculativus intellectus ab actu et habitu speculativo. Non est tantum discrimen reale inter intellectum practicum et speculativum, sed est idem intellectus numero, quia alia ratione vocatur practicus, et alia ratione speculativus, sicut realiter intellectus est voluntas. Quo fit ut hæc sit vera de virtute sermonis: intellectui speculativo habitus practicus inhæret, identidem intellectui practico habitus speculativus inhæret.

theoretical and practical intellect refer to the mind engaged in different kinds of intellectual activities. Moreover, in the same way that it is true to say “The intellect is the will”, it is also true to say, “The theoretical intellect is the practical intellect”. The terms “theoretical intellect” and “practical intellect” signify the same mind, they simply refer to the different kinds of intellectual activities in which the mind can be engaged. It is clear that the theoretical intellect is most closely associated with the mind considered as an intellectual power and that the practical intellect is most closely associated with the mind as a volitive power. It is apparent that in the same way that the terms “intellect” and “will” do not reveal the true metaphysical nature of the mind it is also true that the terms “theoretical intellect” and “practical intellect” do not adequately express the metaphysical nature of the mind. The crucial point of this discussion is that despite the fact that the distinction between the practical and theoretical intellect is accidental since they are not real parts of the mind, it is wrong to affirm that the mind does not relate to its objects in different ways.

PRACTICAL NOTIONS

The building blocks of practical knowledge are practical notions. Notions are not said to be practical because something immediately acts but because something is directed to acting. Mair explains: “the science of medicine does not immediately cause health in the body, but medicine only guides by teaching in what way and how health can be achieved.”⁴⁰³ Hence practical notions are roughly speaking sign-posts indicating in what way the ends of an activity can be achieved. Practical

⁴⁰³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{rb}]. ...scientia medicinalis non immediate causat sanitatem in corpore, sed solum docendo dirigit qualiter et per quæ sanitas fieri possit.

notions can direct *praxis* of an agent in two ways, formally and virtually.

Mair gives this account of the distinction:

...one notion is formally directive of *praxis* immediately according to itself (*secundum se*) , the other only virtually, either containing [a notion] virtually and proximately or a notion remotely guiding *praxis*. A practical notion formally [directing *praxis*] is a complex judgment (by extrinsic denomination) indicating in what way or with what things something should be done. An example [of the formally practical]: that quartan fevers are cured through heat, continuous and daily fevers through cold. An example of the second [i.e., a virtually practical notion] that the flesh of birds is easy to digest.⁴⁰⁴

The distinction between formally practical notions and virtually practical notions can be clarified by building on Mair's examples. In the case of illness a doctor gives specific recommendations of how health can be regained and prescribes a certain course of medical treatment to be followed. The recommendations of the doctor are specific, explicit and formally directive of *praxis* since no additional inference as to what should be done to regain health is required by the patient. However, the statement "the flesh of birds is easy to digest" is a virtually directive practical notion since the behaviour of the agent is modified only if he has the knowledge that it is good to eat easily digestible meats. The notion generated by the proposition is in-itself insufficient to guide action, an act of inference based on additional knowledge, that is knowledge extraneous to the proposition itself, is also required. There is

⁴⁰⁴ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{rb}-va]. Duobus autem modis contingit notitiam esse praxis directivam nam quaedam notitia est formaliter secundum se immediate praxis quaedam tamen virtualiter, vel continent virtualiter et de propinquo vel remote notitiam directivam praxis. Notitia practica formaliter est iudicium complexum denominatione extrinseca enuncians qualiter vel per quæ aliquid est agendum. Exemplum: ut quartanæ febres curandæ sunt per calida, continuæ et quotidianæ per frigida. Exemplum secundi: ut carnes volatiliū sunt facilis digestionis.

a clear sense in which a virtually directive notion is not a practical notion at all. This is confirmed by Mair when he writes that “for a notion to be practical it is not sufficient that it is virtually directive of action”.⁴⁰⁵ This is asserted because otherwise the distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge would collapse since virtually directive notions, as is obvious from the above example, have the same form as the propositions of theoretical knowledge; i.e., they assert that this exists or does not exist, or, that this is the case or this is not the case. This is most explicit in the following passage:

Properly, a practical notion is formally directive of *praxis*, and it is only a complex notion indicating how, or through which things, or when and so on for other circumstances, if the act is to be done. But, a notion which is not indicative and formally directive of *praxis* is theoretical and not practical, either proximately or remotely virtually containing a notion which is practical.⁴⁰⁶

As we have already discussed this does not mean that there are not cases when a theoretical notion is in some sense practical. This is obvious from the definition of *praxis* as an act which is in our power and which agrees with the dictates of right reason. However, it does follow that “no practical notion is a theoretical notion”.⁴⁰⁷ This is the case because it is impossible that the same object requires and does not require the agent to act. Mair concludes: “Therefore it is impossible that the same judgment is practical and theoretical, since a practical

⁴⁰⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{va}]. Ad notitiam esse practicam non sufficit eam esse virtualiter directivam praxis.

⁴⁰⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{va-vb}]. ...notitia proprie practica est formaliter praxis directiva et est tantum notitia complexa enuncians qualiter, aut per quæ, aut quando, et sic de aliis circumstantiis sit agendum. Notitia vero quæ non est enunciativa et formaliter directiva praxis est theórica, et non practica, sive propinque sive remote notitiam virtualiter contineat quæ est practica.

⁴⁰⁷ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{va}]. Prima [conclusio] licet aliqua speculatio sit praxis nulla notitia practica est notitia speculativa. Prior pars huius propositionis patet ex predictis in definitione praxis.

judgment concerns a practical dictate, but a theoretical [judgment] is not about the practical.”⁴⁰⁸ Mair is aware that this is true only in relation to simple propositions. It is quite different with a conjunctive proposition (*propositio conjunctiva*) such as “God is Three and One and God ought to be loved by me” in relation to which there are several judicative notions united to form a judgment of the proposition as a whole. The judgment of a conjunctive proposition such as “God is Three and One and God ought to be loved by me” is both theoretical and practical since the object of the assent to the first part of the proposition, i.e., “God is Three and One”, is a theoretical dictate, and the object of the assent is the practical dictate, i.e., “God ought to be loved”. “But the judgment of the whole conjunctive proposition”, according to Mair, “has this aggregate for its object, therefore for that reason [the judgment] will be theoretical and for the same reason it will be practical, and vice versa.”⁴⁰⁹ This is a particularly interesting thesis since it portrays the complexity of the judicative process in relation to complex propositions, and indeed of syllogisms since it should be clear that some syllogisms are theoretical and others practical. Having established that some judicative acts are theoretical and others practical it might be wondered whether theoretical and practical dispositions are distinguished through their objects, i.e., propositions or through their ends.

⁴⁰⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{va}]. Secunda pars patet quia impossibile est idem obiectum importare praxim et non importare praxim; ergo impossibile est idem iudicium esse practicum et speculativum, quia iudicium practicum est de dictamine practico, speculativum vero de non practico

⁴⁰⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{va}]. Potest enim esse unum iudicium simplex totius copulativæ, et duæ notitiæ iudicativæ, vel tres secundum exigentiam partium copulativæ. Modo capto iudicio simplici istius copulativæ, Deus est Trinus et Unus et Deus est a me diligendus, hoc iudicium est practicum et speculativum. Probatur quia duo iudicia respectu duarum partium illius copulativæ sic se habent, quod unum est practicum et aliud speculativum, quia unus assensus habet dictamen practicum pro obiecto, et aliud dictamen speculativum, sed iudicium respectu totalis copulativæ habet hoc aggregatum pro obiecto, ergo qua ratione erit speculativum, eadem ratione erit practicum, et e converso.

HOW TO DISTINGUISH THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL DISPOSITIONS

Acts produce dispositions that are of the same nature, scientific acts produce scientific disposition, acts of faith produce dispositions of faith. It is not surprising therefore that theoretical and practical dispositions are distinguished in the same way that actual theoretical and practical knowledge are distinguished. As a preliminary it is necessary to point out that Mair is not suggesting that the distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge is an intrinsic or real one: theoretical knowledge is not to be distinguished from practical knowledge in the same way that Socrates is distinguished from Plato; rather, it is to be distinguished in the way that the intellect is distinguished from the will. Mair thinks that the distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge is for the sake of argument (*arguitiva*) and accidental.⁴¹⁰

In particular, in respect of the judgment given to conjunctive and disjunctive propositions the distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge is also for the sake of argument. As we have seen, the assent given to the conjunctive proposition “God is Three and One and God ought to be loved” is both theoretical and practical since assent to the conjunct “God is Three and One” is theoretical and the assent given to “God ought to be loved” which is a practical dictate is by that fact practical. Thus, considered as a whole the proposition both indicates something to be the case and commands an act. This is not to claim that the same assent is both theoretical and practical. Mair writes: “there is no doubt that there is a theoretical and practical assent concerning the same remote object, for example, concerning the subject of the practical object [i.e., practical proposition], or concerning the predicate. For I

⁴¹⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 15^{rb}]. *Scientia speculativa a practica distinguitur arguitiva ab objectis totalibus, hoc est a propositionibus ipsis.*

have a theoretical notion of this, “Man is risible” and a practical notion of this, “Man ought to be loved on account of God”.⁴¹¹

In so far as it is not possible to have a notion which is simultaneously theoretical and practical of the same proximate object, it is also true that it is not possible to have a disposition which is simultaneously theoretical and practical. Mair puts the case as follows: “any practical disposition is distinguished from any theoretical disposition by means of its particular end.”⁴¹² The end particular to the disposition of theoretical knowledge is understanding, and the end particular to practical knowledge is action. The phrase “by means of its particular end” is important since there is a temptation to claim that theoretical knowledge can be considered practical insofar as it applied to resolve and clarify issues. For instance, one might wish to acquire knowledge of the science of geometry in order to construct a bridge. Mair gives the example of someone wishing to learn geometry in order to teach it to his pupils. In both these examples the temptation to claim that theoretical knowledge is also practical is misplaced since it confuses the desire to learn geometry with the desire to apply that knowledge. In respect of a theoretical disposition there is no intellectual act which directs *praxis* “since its elicited act is not directive, for every practical disposition is directive of some act, which indeed is its directive act, different from the particular elicited act.”⁴¹³ In order to sharpen the distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge Mair refers the

⁴¹¹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 15^{rb}]. Non dubium est quin sit assensus speculativus et practicus de eodem obiecto remoto, ut de subiecto obiecti practici, vel de prædicato. Nam habeo notitiam speculativam de hac, homo est risibilis, et practicam de hac, homo est diligendus propter deum.

⁴¹² Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 15^{rb}]. Secunda conclusio. Quilibet habitus practicus a quolibet speculativo proprio fine distinguitur.

⁴¹³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 15^{rb}]. Habitus autem speculativ[us] nullus est actus directivus cum eius actus elicited non sit directivus. Omnis enim habitus practicus directivus est praxis alicuius qui quidem est eius actus directivus alius ab actu proprio elicito.

reader to the authority of Aristotle and Averroes as advocates of his position. He quotes from the *Metaphysics* where Aristotle writes that “the end of theoretical knowledge is truth, the end of practical knowledge is activity.”⁴¹⁴ He also makes reference to Aristotle’s *De Anima* and Averroes’ commentary on the same where once again theoretical and practical understanding are differentiated according to their ends.⁴¹⁵ There is no doubt that theoretical and practical knowledge are to be distinguished, and that they are to be distinguished according to their ends. However, these distinctions are according to Mair accidental since they can be distinguished only according to the manner in which they relate to their objects. It was generally accepted that a disposition inclines the intellect towards acts that are like the acts from which it emerged.⁴¹⁶ For example, a practical disposition inclines the intellect towards practical assents which are like the assents from which the practical disposition emerged, and a theoretical disposition produces theoretical assents which are like the assents from which the theoretical disposition emerged. Given this a distinction between a practical and a theoretical disposition can be formulated in terms of the elicited acts which produced the disposition. A disposition is practical if and only if an elicited act of will leads to, or is directive of *praxis*. Similarly, a disposition is theoretical if and only if the elicited act of will leads not to *praxis* but guides the intellect to acquiring knowledge of the truth.

⁴¹⁴ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 15^{rb}]. Et 2 *Metaphysicæ* [993^b20-21] theoricæ finis est veritas, practicæ vero opus.

⁴¹⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 15^{rb}]. Et tertio *De Anima* [433^a14-15], intellectus qui propter aliquid ratiocinatur et practicus differt a speculativo in fine. Ubi commentator commentato 49, Operativus (inquit) differt a speculativo in participatione et fine. The text of Averroes reads “Et intellectus per quem agitur (et est operativus) differt a speculativo in perfectione et fine.” Averroes. *In Aristotelis De anima*. [pp. 516-518; n.b. p. 516 lines 10-11].

⁴¹⁶ Mair. *In tertium*, d. 23, q. 5; [fol. 51^{rb}]. An habitus inclinet præcise in actus similes actibus a quibus emersit. Respondetur. Dicitur quod sic.

THEORETICAL PREMISES AND PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS

Given that the ends of theoretical and practical knowledge are different it is interesting to consider whether there are occasions when a practical assent can be based on a combination of theoretical and practical assents. The simplest expression of this is a theoretical syllogism whose conclusion follows from a major premise which is the object of a practical assent, and a minor premise which is the object of a theoretical assent. Such a proposition on the account given by Mair is of a mixed nature since the assent to the whole proposition would be constituted of assents to both theoretical and practical propositions. The classic examples of this kind of syllogism are given by Aristotle in *De motu animalium*. They are “I ought to create a good, a house is good: Straight-away I create a house” and “I need a covering, a coat is a covering: I need a coat. What I need I ought to make, I need a coat: I make a coat. And the conclusion “I must make a coat” is an action.”⁴¹⁷ In each case one of the premises is theoretical, it indicates what is the case; therefore the assent to that premise is a theoretical notion. The other premise is in both cases practical since it is of the good and thereby prescribes what is or ought to be done. The syllogism concludes in an action. We have already encountered the syllogism Mair uses to exemplify the kind of practical syllogism with which we are concerned. It is, “Every highest good ought to be loved, God is a highest good; therefore God ought to be loved.”⁴¹⁸ The difference between Aristotle’s practical syllogism and Mair’s is striking: whereas Aristotle’s practical

⁴¹⁷ Aristotle. *De motu animalium*, [701^a15-20].

⁴¹⁸ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 15^{va}]. Conceditur quod conclusio practica sequitur ex duabus assensibus quarum una præmissarum est practica et alia speculativa, ut sic arguendo, “Omne summum bonum est diligendum, Deus est summum bonum; ergo deus est diligendus”. “Omne malum est vitandum, adulterium est malum; ergo adulterium est vitandum”. Minores istorum syllogismorum sunt speculativæ et earum assensus sunt speculativi. See also Mair. *In tertium*, q. 8, d. 33; [fol. 82^{vb}].

syllogism concludes in an action, Mair's syllogism concludes in an ought-judgment. On Mair's account, it is sufficient for a syllogism to be directive of *praxis* in order for it to be classed as practical. In Mair's syllogism, the assent to the minor premise can be properly ascribed a truth value since it is a statement signifying a state of affairs. It is insufficient in and of itself to cause a practical notion since it is not directive of activity. Mair thought that if the assent to the minor premise in a syllogism such as this is sufficient to generate a practical notion then the theoretical notion is jettisoned.⁴¹⁹ The precise relationship of practical knowledge to other kinds of knowledge was the subject of much debate. There are two questions which require our attention. The first question is: Whether theology is theoretical or practical knowledge? The second question concerns the relationship of practical to prudential knowledge. I shall now turn to this matter.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE TO THEOLOGY

In the first of three theses, Mair contends that theology cannot be considered either theoretical or practical knowledge because it does not meet the requirements of knowledge in the strict sense of the term.⁴²⁰ Obviously, this is to understand theology in such a way that a theological assent is nothing other than an assent of faith.⁴²¹ However, in the second thesis Mair writes that theological knowledge will be constituted of both theoretical and practical notions if the scope of the term "knowledge" is broadened, or the scope of the inquiry is expanded to consider any theological assent, and to understand theology as a body

⁴¹⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 15^{va}]. Si assensus minorum in his syllogismis sufficient ad notitiam practicam, evacuabis notitiam speculativam.

⁴²⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{vb}]. Prima est negativa quæ sic probatur. Theologia non est scientia ergo neque est practica neque speculativa.

⁴²¹ See section on "Theological Truth" in Chapter 6 pp. 167-170.

of knowledge constituted out of simple acts of assent and intellectual dispositions.⁴²² Mair writes:

This is obvious [viz., that there is a distinction between theoretical/speculative and practical theology] since it is true of one of these that its act is not formally directive of *praxis*, but it is true of the other that its act is formally directive of *praxis*. Therefore, one is theoretical and the other practical. The consequence holds because of the terms.⁴²³

Mair is drawing our attention to the fact that in the body of knowledge known as theology some of the assents that we give are theoretical and others practical. Examples of theoretical assents include “God exists”, “Christ is God”, and “God is the highest Good”; examples of practical assents include “God ought to be loved”, and “On account of God you should love your neighbour”.

The third and final thesis put forward to determine whether theology is theoretical or practical knowledge understands theology not as simple act of assent or disposition but collectively. Theology, understood in the collective sense, includes both theoretical and practical dispositions. On this understanding theology is to be classed as practical knowledge.⁴²⁴ “This is obvious”, according to Mair, “since the most powerful part of theology directs *praxis*, but it is right that the whole should be named after the most important part. Therefore [theology is

⁴²² Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{vb}]. Extendendo terminum scientia, vel petendo de quocumque assensu, et capiendo theologiam pro simplici actu vel habitu, aliqua theologia est speculativa et aliqua est practica.

⁴²³ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{vb}]. Patet quia alicuius theologiæ actus non est alicuius praxis formaliter directivus, alicuius vero actus est praxis formaliter directivus. Igitur aliqua est speculativa et aliqua practica. Consequentia tenet ex terminis.

⁴²⁴ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^{vb}]. Tertia conclusio. Collective capiendo theologiam quæ includit habitus speculativos et practicos ipsa est practica.

practical knowledge].”⁴²⁵ Theology was thought to be directive of *praxis* since scripture and the dictates of authorities such as Augustine contain notions that are both formally and virtually directive of *praxis* insofar as scripture and the dictates of the authorities are concerned with promoting a life of charity. Moral philosophy is practical in the same way that theology is practical. Mair thought, that on Augustine’s reading of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, Augustine had understood Aristotle to have said that the whole of moral philosophy is practical because *praxis* is the end of the most powerful part of moral philosophy. Initially the following passage from the *Nicomachean Ethics* is only reported: “Since moreover this treatise is not, like the others [sc., the other treatises], about contemplation, for we are inquiring not so that we might know what virtue is, but so that we might become good (*ut boni efficiamur*)”. However Mair expands on the original Aristotelian claim when he continues, “and nevertheless, there are many theoretical notions in moral philosophy, for example, that virtue mediates between two extremes, that there is more opposition between two extremes than an extreme and the intermediate state”.⁴²⁶ Thus, moral philosophy considered as a unified body of knowledge is practical knowledge, that is, knowledge which aims at action and not knowledge which aims at understanding or contemplation. Though there are theoretical notions

⁴²⁵ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^vb]. Patet quia potissima pars theologiæ est directiva praxis sed iustum est totum a potiori parte denominari; igitur.

⁴²⁶ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 14^vb]. Præterea tota moralis philosophia vocatur practica quia ille est finis potissimus eius, secundum illud Aristotelis 2 *Ethicorum* 2 Capitulo 2 [1103^b26-29]: Cum autem præsens tractatio non contemplationis sit ut cæteræ gratia, non enim ut sciamus quid nam sit virtus, sed ut efficiamur boni consideramus, et tamen multæ sunt notitiæ speculativæ in morali philosophia, ut puta quod virtus mediet inter duo extrema, quod extrema magis pugnant quam extremum cum medio. Cf., Mair. *In tertium*, q. 8, d. 33; [fol. 82^vb]. Sexta conclusio [viz., notitia practica potest deduci ex notitiis non practicis et notitia speculativa ex notitia practica.] patet. Tota moralis scientia est practica secundum Aristotelem 2 *Ethicorum*. Moralis philosophia non est contemplationis gratia non enim ut sciamus quid est virtus scrutamur sed ut boni efficiamur.

contained in moral philosophy such notions, as we are about to see, are prudential notions which direct and regulate all virtue.

PRACTICAL AND PRUDENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

The second question about the relationship of practical knowledge to other kinds of knowledge primarily concerns the relationship of practical knowledge to prudential knowledge but it also incorporates a discussion of the relationship of prudential reasoning to moral philosophy. These issues are introduced in the response to the following question: In what way is practical knowledge to be distinguished from the prudential?

It is not surprising that the distinction between practical and prudential reason is not a real distinction but only one of reason, i.e., it is an accidental distinction. In the discussion of scientific knowledge it was shown that knowledge in the strict sense concerned the universal and the necessary. This is a requirement also laid down for practical knowledge. Similarly it might be argued that if there is to be something such as prudential knowledge, then it too must concern the universal and the necessary since its basis is practical knowledge. How then to account for the fact that human action requires both universal and singular dictates of reason? In this instance, it is best to use the words of Mair:

I understand Aristotle as follows: Prudence is sometimes of the universal and of the necessary, and then it agrees in supposition with practical knowledge. Indeed, it differs from moral philosophy which is about dispositions of the will. For it is plain that it does not differ from [prudence] itself which is intellectual moral philosophy (*moralis philosophia intellectualis*). But it is not necessary that prudence is of the universal and of the necessary which is required for knowledge. And thus it is a distinction of

reason. Or the aggregate of practical knowledge is distinguished from the aggregate of prudential knowledge (*prudentiæ*) since one multitude includes contingent propositions which the other excludes.⁴²⁷

It is obvious that some distinctions need to be made to clarify precisely in what way prudential knowledge is different from moral knowledge. Later in the *Commentary on the Sentences* Mair writes that prudence is concerned with both the universal and the singular.⁴²⁸ This is clearly stated in the *Prologue* to the *Commentary on the Sentences* in the following passage:

Prudence is nothing but a judicative notion revealing that something is to be done as it ought to be done or to be fled as it ought to be. For example the judicative notion by which I judge that this person afflicted with cholera [and] agitated by bile should be calmed through soothing words, or a notion of this, “All virtue is to be pursued.”⁴²⁹

The dictates of prudential knowledge can be both universal and singular. Universal prudential knowledge, when it is constituted by judicative notions such as “All virtue is to be pursued” or “All vice is to be shunned”, is synonymous with practical knowledge: its principles are universal and necessary. However, it is also clear that prudential knowledge is not only concerned with the universal since it is also

⁴²⁷ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 15^vb]. Ego sic intelligo Aristotelem [sc., *Nicomachean Ethics* 1139^b20-1141^b23], prudentia est interdum universalium et necessariorum, et tunc coincidit in supponendo cum scientia practica. A morali quidem philosophia differt, quæ est de habitibus voluntatis, palam est enim quod non differt ab ipsamet quæ est moralis philosophia intellectualis. Sed non est necesse quod prudentia sit universalium et necessariorum, quod requiritur ad scientiam. Et sic est discrimen rationis, vel aggregatum scientiæ practicæ distinguitur ab aggregato prudentiæ, cum una multitudo includat contingentes propositiones quas alia excludit.

⁴²⁸ Mair. *In tertium* q. 2, d. 33; [fol. 77^{va-vb}]. Prudentia est universalium... Prudentia est singularium.

⁴²⁹ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 15^vb]. Prudentia nihil aliud est nisi notitia iudicativa ostendens aliquid esse faciendum taliter qualiter fieri debet vel fugiendum taliter qualiter fugi debet, ut notitia iudicativa qua iudicio quod iste cholericus bili commotus est per levia verba mitigandus, vel notitia huius, omnem honestum est prosequendum.

constituted by judicative notions which elicit a specific course of action, for example, the judicative notion through which one judges that cholera should be cured in this or that way, or that to give to this or that charity is good thing. “Prudence”, in the words of Mair, “is the guide and controller of all moral virtues. Moreover it is the same thing for prudence to direct virtue and to regulate it, and to reveal in what way it ought to be done.”⁴³⁰ Prudence is itself an intellectual virtue, that is, a virtue concerned with judging truly or rightly. Specifically it is a virtue which directs *praxis*. It will be recalled that the medieval philosophers in whom we are interested contended that nothing is willed unless already known (*nihil volitum nisi præcognitum*). This was emphasized with the claim that the will is blind in its operation without the assistance of the intellect. It is arguable that since prudence is an intellectual virtue it follows that all moral virtues necessarily presuppose that the moral agent has prudential knowledge. The constant juxtaposition of the intellect and the will, of theoretical and practical knowledge, of prudential and moral knowledge has immediate appeal since it gives clear expression to the diversity of acts of which the mind is capable and at the same time emphasizes that this diversity does not originate in separate powers of the mind but originate in the simple substance that is known as mind. It has also emerged from our account that there is a priority of the intellectual over the practical. This is clear from the assertion that the will is blind in its operations without the assistance of the intellect. This has important consequences for understanding the relationship of intellectual virtues to moral virtues since on the account given by Mair it is necessary that prudence be in position before there is

⁴³⁰ Mair. *In primum, prol.*, q. 6; [fol. 15^vb]. Prudentia est auriga et directrix virtutum moralium. Idem autem est prudentiam dirigere virtutem, et eam regulare, et ostendere qualiter ipsa fieri debeat.

even the possibility of acquiring a moral virtue. In the next section I want to return to a consideration of the nature of faith and to determine the kind of relationship that exists between acts of intellect and will required for the generation of an assent in relation to an article of faith.

IS FAITH THEORETICAL OR PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE?

Faith is generated by means of a topical argument and a positive movement of the will. This implies that the assent to an act of faith is neither exclusively the result of an act of intellect, nor is it exclusively the result of an act of will. Doubt was cast on this by the suggestion that if the intellect and the will were distinct in such a way that they could be separated by the absolute power of God then the assent of faith would inhere either exclusively in an act of intellect; or the assent of faith would inhere primarily in an act of intellect and only secondarily in an act of will. The same assertion is made in respect of prudential knowledge. Here too it was thought that if the intellect and will could be distinguished then prudence would either inhere exclusively in the intellect or primarily in the intellect and only secondarily in the will. The question of the primacy of the intellect over the will also arose when considering theological knowledge as a collection of theoretical and practical dispositions. On this account theological knowledge is practical because understood collectively the goal of theological knowledge is to indicate how charity and other theological virtues are to be acquired. It emerges from these various descriptions of different kinds of knowledge that the primacy of the intellect over the will does not exclude the possibility of practical notions having primacy over theoretical notions. This primacy of practical notions over the theoretical results in the whole being denominated practical. Succinctly, faith is formally directive of *praxis*. Therefore, it can be concluded that

the virtue of acquired faith is primarily practical and only secondarily theoretical, since it includes both theoretical and practical dispositions. This holds true despite the claim that in exceptional circumstances an assent of faith would inhere either exclusively or primarily in the intellect and not the will.

CONCLUSION

In many ways our discussion of knowledge and belief has been like the journey of the pilgrim. The journey started with the question: “How is the pilgrim to acquire faith?”. It was quickly discovered that before approaching the epistemological question of how faith is acquired it was first necessary to determine the metaphysical nature of human beings. Human beings are composed of matter and form and their specific form is the mind (*anima intellectiva*). The mind is a metaphysically simple substance composed of the powers of intellect and will. The intellect is the power to understand and the will the power to choose. Though we refer to these powers as distinct they are not really separable from each other: “the intellect is the will in every way”. Mair thought that the powers of intellect and will are distinguishable only by reason, and in order to prove that this is the case he deployed his vast knowledge of terminist logic. He showed that the terms “intellect” and “will” refer absolutely to the same indivisible substance which we know as mind but they connote different activities. “Intellect” connotes the mind engaged in an act of understanding and “will” connotes the mind engaged in an act of choosing.

Notions are nothing other than the cognitive acts through which a cognitive power is vitally changed. Almost the entire range of notions was investigated. We considered the division between sensory and intellectual notions, intuitive and abstractive notions, apprehensive and judicative notions, evident and inevident assent, and finally theoretical and practical notions. These are the foundations of late-medieval

epistemology and they proved central to providing an answer to how the pilgrim is able to acquire faith.

Before giving any response to the question of how the pilgrim is to acquire faith attention was first given to a consideration of what faith is not: faith is neither scientific knowledge, nor is faith opinion. Faith is not scientific knowledge because scientific knowledge is about that which is universally evident and true. Though opinion is inevident in a way similar to faith, faith is not opinion because opinion is always hesitant. In contrast, faith is unhesitant assent to truths that pertain to salvation. It emerges that an assent of faith is caused by the intellect assenting to the conclusion of an opinative argument and that this assent is supplemented by a positive movement of the will. This movement of the will causes one to adhere to the opinative assent unhesitantly. The involvement of both the intellect and the will is necessary to produce an assent of faith, neither one of them is sufficient in and of itself to cause an assent of faith. The only exception to this is if one grants that the intellect can be separated from the will by means of the absolute power of God, then the assent of faith would inhere in the intellect.

With a firm understanding of the nature of scientific, opinative, and faithful assents in place it was then shown that acts of faith and acts of knowledge cannot occur simultaneously in relation to the same proximate object i.e., the conclusion of a syllogism. This is the case because if it were possible, then there would be both evident and inevident assent in relation to the same proximate object, which is logically impossible. The same holds true in relation to the possibility of opinative and scientific assents co-existing in relation to the same conclusion. However this does not mean that it is not possible for actual knowledge to be incompatible with a disposition. This is proved because while someone may have knowledge that something is to be

pursued, this knowledge may not manifest itself in outward behaviour. In contemporary debates this issue is sometimes classed as the defeasibility of practical reason. It is generally held that knowledge which is directive of activity is defeasible by the addition of new information into the reasoning process. In more technical terms, the conclusion of a practical syllogism is an action, and such a conclusion is said to be defeasible by the introduction of new premises into the syllogism.

The division between theoretical and practical knowledge was treated last in the discussion because it draws heavily on issues introduced and developed in earlier chapters. Theoretical and practical notions are the building blocks of theoretical and practical knowledge. A theoretical notion is one which is directed toward understanding and a practical notion is one which is formally directive of *praxis*. As it was shown, it is not sufficient for a practical notion to be only virtually directive of *praxis*. It is a necessary condition for a notion to be called practical that the notion is immediately directive of *praxis*. To be immediately directive of *praxis* is to indicate precisely how some end is to be achieved. Among the many interesting issues considered was the relationship of theoretical to practical premises, a relationship which was discussed in the context of theological knowledge.

It was reported that there is no such thing as theological knowledge in the strict sense because knowledge concerns the *propositio scibilis* which is a proposition fitted to become evident by the application of premises to it. Hence theology cannot be described as either theoretical or practical knowledge. However, Mair does not hesitate to defend the thesis that theology considered not simply as individual acts or individual dispositions but considered collectively as the product of both theoretical and practical dispositions is practical knowledge. It is

practical because though theology is a product of both theoretical and practical knowledge the greater part of theology is concerned with *praxis*. And, according to Mair, it is fitting that the whole should be named after the greater part. Theology is formally directive of *praxis* in a number of ways. In the first instance theology is practical because examples of practical theological notions include such things as “God ought to be loved” and “Love your neighbour because God has commanded it”. Moreover, it was also asserted that theology was formally directive of *praxis* on the basis of theoretical theological notions such as “God exists”. It is obvious that if one gives scientific or theoretical assent to a proposition of this kind, there are wide ranging consequences. For instance, the pilgrim who has knowledge of the existence of God will almost certainly modify his behaviour since he will accept that the commandments of the Old Testament which are practical dictates, are truly the word of God. I say “almost certainly” since it is not incompatible that the pilgrim knows that God exists and does not modify his behaviour because of some defect of the will. There is also the possibility that one who assents to the existence of God does not assent to the claim that there is any direct connection between God and his creatures. This latter option cannot be applied to the medieval concept of the pilgrim. However, it does show that the pilgrim who possesses theoretical knowledge does not necessarily act on that knowledge. There is a gulf between knowledge and action which is bridged by means of an act of will which commands the pilgrim to act. This is particularly clear in the case where the will commands the pilgrim so that he might believe that the command of the preacher to the lame is a miracle bearing witness to the fact that “Christ is God”. The preacher commands “Get up and Walk”, and on hearing these words the lame man gets up and walks. The evidence is insufficient to prove that

what has happened is more than a coincidence. It is the command of the will that causes the pilgrim to believe that a miracle has taken place.

The central theme of my thesis has been the nature of assent and the foundations of knowledge. In particular, I have been interested in the divisions between intuitive and abstractive notions, apprehensive and judicative notions in order to clarify the way scientific assent relates to assents of faith and opinion, i.e., assents of probable reason. It is clear that late-medieval philosophers such as John Mair and the members of his circle shared a lively interest in this area. Moreover, in opposition to the claim that Mair and his colleagues were so entrenched in scholastic modes of thinking that their philosophical and even theological innovation was negligible, it has been shown that this is not the case. It cannot be denied that Mair and many of his contemporaries were primarily influenced by thinkers such as William of Ockham, but it is clear that their willingness to integrate the philosophical insights of thinkers such as Aquinas helps to show that Mair and the members of his circle were dynamic and creative philosophers. This is particularly obvious in the writings of John Mair whose impact on philosophers and theologians of late-medieval Europe is only now being properly acknowledged.

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